

Mexico City's  
politics of  
pollution

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# IN THESE TIMES

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## Strange Bedfellows

Guatemalan National Police and the  
political seduction of Andrew Young

By Salim Muwakkil

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Lionel Delvingne



Jean-Marie Simon

Top, Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young; center, Guatemalan National Police controlling a demonstration; bottom, Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo.



Dede Faller/Impact Visuals

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# Unravelling the many mysteries about Irangate's Michael Ledeen

By John B. Judis

WASHINGTON

In the early days of the Iran-contra scandal, Michael Ledeen emerged as a key figure, a beady-eyed Svengali who had almost single-handedly set up the three-cornered arms-for-hostages deal with the U.S., Israel and Iran. The Tower Commission report released in February confirmed this impression, even suggesting that Ledeen may have profited financially from the arms deals. But four months of administration testimony before the Select Committee and Ledeen's own private testimony, which was released last week, paint a different picture.

Ledeen did play an important role in the first phase of the arms for hostage transactions—from May to December 1985. But even though he continued to work as a consultant to the National Security Council until December 1986, he had little, if any, part in subsequent arms deals. He was squeezed out by former National Security aide Lt. Col. Oliver North—and why he was squeezed out may reveal something about what North really expected to get out of the arms transfers to Iran.

**Hostage business:** Ledeen is a consummate Cold-War operator, who has close ties to the disreputable world of arms dealers and influence peddlers. A former historian, he was denied tenure at Washington University in St. Louis because of charges of plagiarism. He went to Italy in 1974, where he became a self-styled expert on terrorism and reportedly hired himself out to the Italian secret police. In 1977 he moved back to the U.S., where he became associated with the neo-conservative Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington. There he schemed to discredit the Carter administration, while becoming friendly with CSIS fellow Alexander Haig.

When Haig was appointed secretary of state in 1981, he

dealer Theodore Shackley, who in January 1985 had tried to convince the CIA to sell American arms to Iran.

In May 1985 Ledeen travelled to Israel to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres. McFarlane told the Tower Commission that during this trip Ledeen was "on his own hook," but Ledeen insists that the trip was authorized, and he gave the select committee proof that the NSC had paid for it. Ledeen went to collect intelligence about Iran, and Peres did put him in touch with a group of knowledgeable Israelis, but he also gave him a note to deliver to McFarlane requesting that the U.S. authorize the Israeli sale of military spare parts to Iran. When Ledeen returned to the U.S., McFarlane instructed him to give Peres the go-ahead.

At the same time other operators, including Israeli official David Kimche, Shackley and fellow arms merchants Adnan Khashoggi and Manuchehr Ghorbanifar, were trying to involve the U.S. in arms sales, but Ledeen briefly became the contact among all of them. In July 1985, while he was vacationing in Israel, Ledeen met with the Israelis and Ghorbanifar. According to his testimony, Ledeen carried back Ghorbanifar's proposal that the U.S. allow further Israeli arms sales to Iran as a "gesture" to pro-U.S. Iranians, who for their part would try to arrange the release of "one or more hostages."

In early September the Israelis delivered 100 TOW anti-tank missiles to Iran, but Ghorbanifar's contacts claimed that the missiles had fallen into the hands of the Revolutionary Guards. They asked for an additional gesture. On September 14 the Israelis sent 400 more missiles, and the Lebanese Shi'ites released American hostage Rev. Benjamin Weir. In early October at a meeting in Washington of Ledeen, the Israelis and Ghorbanifar, Ghorbanifar claimed that the Iranians would release more hostages in exchange for more weapons. "Clearly now," Ledeen told the select committee, it was "a matter of more hostages for weapons."

Ledeen claims that he expressed his own reservations about trading arms for hostages, but was rebuked by the Israelis. He claims that afterward he told McFarlane that he wanted to get out of the "hostage business."

**Useful character:** In late October 1985 Ghorbanifar arranged a meeting in Europe with a "senior Iranian," who, according to Ledeen, wanted to work closely "toward an improvement in the relationship between the U.S. and Iran." The official wanted to establish a "secure communications channel" to the U.S. and wanted money for small arms. Ledeen took the Iranian as proof of Ghorbanifar's *bona fides*, even though he knew that Ghorbanifar had given the man \$300,000. He reported back to McFarlane that this is "what we have been looking for." But McFarlane did not ask Ledeen to follow up on his meeting.

In late November the Israelis, with CIA help, sent a shipment of HAWK anti-aircraft missiles to Iran. Immediately afterward Ghorbanifar called Ledeen and asked him to convey a message to Reagan from the Iranians complaining that the wrong weapons had been sent. Ledeen gave the message to Adm. John Poindexter, who had just succeeded McFarlane as national security adviser. According to Ledeen, Poindexter told him, "You are being taken off this project, at least temporarily, because we now need people with greater technical expertise than you."

Ledeen claims that he then withdrew entirely from the Iran initiative, but the committee presented him with considerable evidence that he did not. He continued to agitate for establishing links with pro-U.S. Iranians through his "senior Iranian" contact. CIA Director William Casey agreed with Ledeen's "geopolitical" strategy but told him "it was necessary to do the hostages first." Ledeen continued to work with Ghorbanifar, and he conveyed Ghorbanifar's proposals back to Casey and other CIA officials. He also vouched for Ghorbanifar among CIA officials who were highly suspicious of him, and he arranged for Ghorbanifar, who had failed a CIA lie-detector

test before, to take a new test in January 1986. Clair George, the CIA deputy director for covert operations, told the committee that everybody in the CIA directorate was "being wooed and wined by Mr. Ledeen."

In his testimony Ledeen said, "I thought there were things that Ghorbanifar could do for the U.S. which, so far as I could tell, nobody else could, and that we just could not walk away from such a useful character."

Ghorbanifar flunked the polygraph (Ledeen claims that the CIA sabotaged Ghorbanifar by asking him questions that would have compromised his contacts), but he was retained anyway as the middleman between the U.S. and Iran. What changed after December 1985 was that Ghorbanifar no longer reported to Ledeen but to Oliver North. Ledeen played no further role in U.S.-Iranian relations after December.

**North takes control:** North first became involved in the arms-for-hostages deal when he arranged for Weir's return to the U.S. He played an active role in the November 1985 HAWK shipment and in December virtually took over the arms-deal negotiations, becoming the principal link to Ghorbanifar and the Israelis. Ledeen was "temporarily" displaced as a result of Poindexter's order, but he may have been permanently removed when North began to voice doubts about Ledeen to other administration officials.

In a December note to Poindexter, North blamed Ledeen and Israeli arms dealer Al Schwimmer for the HAWK mix-up. Former Pentagon official Noel Koch told the select committee that North had told him that Ledeen "screwed up" the price on the TOW shipments. In his testimony before the committee, Ledeen claimed that he had nothing to do with negotiating prices for the TOW missiles or arranging for the HAWK shipments. But knowledgeable Irangate watchers believe that Ledeen played a peripheral role in the HAWK shipments.

In January 1986 North spread new, even more serious allegations about Ledeen. He told Poindexter that Israeli official Amiram Nir "suspects a 'secret business arrangement' between Ledeen and Ghorbanifar." He reported to Poindexter eight days later that there were "further grounds" for believing that Ledeen was involved in a secret business deal with Ghorbanifar. But in spite of these severe misgivings about Ledeen's honesty, Poindexter and North retained him as a consultant. He was only let go in December 1986 after Poindexter resigned.

North may indeed have believed that Ledeen was on the take, but he also appears to have been intent on retaining sole control over the operation. And North may have wanted to do this in order to change the purpose of the arms deal—from obtaining the release of hostages—or, in Ledeen's imagination, establishing a relationship with Iran—to funding the contras. In his testimony North claimed that he first heard of the idea that arms profits could be diverted to the contras during a January 1986 conversation with Ghorbanifar. But according to the *Wall Street Journal*, the select committee has obtained evidence from Israel that North himself had raised the idea during an early December 1985 meeting with an Israeli official.

**Defending Ghorbanifar:** Was Ledeen on the take? Since Ghorbanifar tried to bribe North, according to North's testimony, he may have also tried to bribe Ledeen. The committee, however, found in Ledeen's financial records no evidence of payment from Ghorbanifar or any of the other arms dealers. Nir has denied telling North that Ledeen was being paid off by Ghorbanifar. But Nir, a seasoned politician, might simply be denying in public what he said in private, and Ledeen, who as an international consultant is familiar with the ins and outs of hiding money, could still be sheltering funds in a foreign bank.

What is most puzzling in Ledeen's testimony is his continuing regard for Ghorbanifar. He insists that Ghorbanifar, the middleman who profited from the arms deals, was not really interested in selling arms but in establishing a new relationship between the U.S. and Iran.

Why would Ledeen continue to defend Ghorbanifar? He is naive or is covering for a man he is doing business with. It is doubtful that we will ever know the truth, since those who know are unlikely to speak, and if they speak are unlikely to speak the truth.

## INSIDE STORY

hired Ledeen as a consultant on terrorism. In December 1984 Haig's former deputy, Robert McFarlane, became national security adviser and hired Ledeen as a consultant. Meanwhile, Ledeen remained at CSIS and ran a seemingly lucrative consulting business, ISI Enterprises. His clients included at least two foreign governments and his business associates included former CIA official and arms

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By Jim Naureckas

IT BEGAN WITH A 1981 BUSINESS ARSON IN LOS Angeles. Then, later that year, a social worker was shot to death in San Francisco. A publisher was murdered in Houston in 1982. In 1984 an elderly San Francisco restaurant owner was killed and her husband wounded. A former government official survived a 1986 shooting in Westminster, Calif. In the latest incident, this August a newspaper editor died when his Garden Grove, Calif., offices were doused with gasoline and set on fire.

The crimes are connected by two things. One: The victim was Vietnamese. And a shadowy group—the Vietnamese Organization to Exterminate Communists and Restore the Nation (VOECRN)—claimed responsibility each time.

**Death squad on U.S. soil:** Before the last attack, police refused to take these links seriously. Even today the FBI's official position is that there is "no evidence of any Vietnamese groups involved in terrorism." But the Garden Grove police investigating the arson murder of Pham Tap Van, publisher of a Vietnamese-language gossip sheet, have reached a different conclusion. They now believe they are dealing with, in effect, a death squad operating on U.S. soil.

After a VOECRN letter claimed responsibility for the fire that killed Van, the Garden Grove police released this statement: "All evidence accumulated to this point tends to indicate that the letter is genuine and the author of the letter is responsible for, or directly connected to, the crime." The police added that the reason the letter gives for the killing, Van's "running of a so-called 'pro-Communist' advertisement" in his paper, appears to be the actual motive. Despite death threats, Van had run an ad for a Canadian firm that transferred money from refugees to relatives still in Vietnam—considered a traitorous practice by right-wing Vietnamese.

Little is known about the VOECRN. One Indochina researcher describes it as being composed of "contract killers moving around the country," while others see it as a loose association of different groups using the same name. The core of the organization is believed to be a former officer of the South Vietnamese government. "A lot of these people doing these things were trained and directed by the U.S. during the war," according to Merle Ratner, an organizer for the New York-based Committee in Solidarity with Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia).

During the Vietnam War, thousands of South Vietnamese received special intelligence training for operations like the infamous Phoenix Program, which targeted upward of 20,000 suspected leftists for assassination. Attacks linked to the VOECRN and other right-wing Vietnamese bear the signs of this training, according to victims of the violence.

**Double motives:** The VOECRN is thought to have links to both Vietnamese organized crime groups and to above-ground "resistance" groups. In 1982 Houston-based journalist Nguyen Dam Phong criticized the National United Front for the Liberation of Vietnam—a group opposed to that country's Communist government—for extorting money from refugees. He was later found dead with a message stating that he had been executed by the VOECRN as a "Vietnamese traitor."



Police in Garden Grove, Calif., search the wreckage of a Vietnamese-language newspaper office destroyed by arson. Publisher Pham Tap Van was found dead. A right-wing Vietnamese group claimed responsibility.

## Vietnamese right linked to terror in U.S.

The underworld gangs are led by people believed to be behind the political killings, according to those investigating the violence. "They're the guys who floated up rivers into North Vietnam to assassinate people," a California police officer told the *San Jose Mercury News*.

Extortion is usually a major activity of immigrant-group criminals, according to law enforcement sources, and in the Vietnamese community it often takes a political form. Vietnamese underworld gangs "go to businessmen and say, 'You've got to help us liberate Vietnam and your share is \$200 a month,'" according to Tony Russo, an expert on Vietnamese issues. What such gangs are doing to actually "liberate Vietnam" is unclear. Russo points out that there has been little anti-government fighting in Vietnam since 1982.

Ngo Vinh Long, a Vietnamese-born scholar still reviled by right-wing refugees for his anti-war views, says that as the Vietnamese community matures and assimilates, it becomes more difficult to extort money. Political violence helps organized crime leaders "show that their threats are credible" in the refugee community, according to Long.

Long, who had a Molotov cocktail thrown at him when he spoke at Harvard University in 1981—the VOECRN did not claim involvement—has no doubt that the attacks have political motives beyond simple extortion. "If you show any sympathy to the Vietnamese back home they're going to get rid of you," he says.

Economic support for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam can also lead to violent retribution. Several attacks claimed by VOECRN have been against people or organiza-

tions involved in transfers of cash or goods to Vietnam. A Los Angeles import-export company named PEDCO, for example, was torched in 1981. In 1984, Nguyen Van Luy, a businessman active in efforts to improve political and economic relations between the U.S. and Vietnam, was shot in San Francisco. The VOECRN said he was "collecting material and money...to send home to support the blood-thirsty Vietnamese Communists." And this year publisher Van was killed after running the currency-exchange ad.



Nguyen Van Luy was shot for trying to "destroy the anti-Communist spirit of the population," a communique claimed.

Economic support for Vietnam is a betrayal of the "resistance," right-wing refugees believe. But it also competes with black-market currency smuggling, another mainstay of Vietnamese organized crime.

**Get out of jail free:** Although the VOECRN's terror goes back six years, it has received scant media attention. "Somehow it's OK for Asians to do this to other Asians," says Long, a professor of Vietnamese history at the University of Maine. But he and others suggest an even more sinister collusion.

"I assume that many of these right-wing activists have maintained some relationship with U.S. intelligence personnel and perhaps even agencies, and probably through them to the police," says former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, who has tried to get the FBI to investigate the killings more actively. Critics complain that even in cases where arrests have been made, prosecutions have often been mishandled and defendants have been let off. Author and researcher Peter Dale Scott of the Washington, D.C.-based International Center for Development Policy refers to this pattern as the "get-out-of-jail-free-card phenomenon."

Only one person, Lam Van Minh, has served time for any of five recent killings linked to politics in the Vietnamese community. That case was unique: The victim, California State University professor Edward Coopersman, was non-Vietnamese. Coopersman's friends felt he was killed because he encouraged scientific cooperation between Vietnam and the U.S., although police ruled out a political motive and the VOECRN did not claim the murder. Minh served less than half of his three-year manslaughter sentence.

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Joel Bleifuss

## Bon appetit

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) testing has detected pesticide residues in 48 percent of the samples of the 26 most popular fruits and vegetables, according to an investigation by the Washington-based Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). "This figure is probably an understatement," NRDC scientist Lawrie Mott told *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. "The FDA's routine monitoring methods can detect only half of the chemicals put on food." The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has identified nine of the 25 most commonly found pesticide residues discovered by the FDA as carcinogens. And although most of the residues are within legal limits, the NRDC maintains that those limits do not necessarily denote safety, especially when the pesticide is carcinogenic. The domestic fruits and vegetables that the FDA found to contain pesticide residues more than 40 percent of the time are, from top to bottom: celery, cherries, strawberries, grapefruit, lettuce, peaches, apples, carrots, spinach and pears. As for imported produce, add to that list: bell peppers, cucumbers, cantaloupe, tomatoes, cabbage, oranges, green beans and grapes.

## How to avoid pesticide consumption

The best way to be sure you are not eating pesticides is to pay more and buy "organic" produce. According to the *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, you could also try washing your fruits and vegetables in soapy water. That might work, but then it might not since many pesticides are water-repellent. Furthermore, some pesticides are combined with insoluble waxes that no amount of washing will remove. Such wax-based pesticides are commonly used on tomatoes. (According to the National Academy of Sciences, if pesticide residues on tomatoes were at the maximum permitted EPA limit, the consumption of such tomatoes and tomato products would cause nearly one case of cancer in every 1,000 people exposed during a 70-year lifetime.) Since washing isn't a cure-all, you could try peeling your produce. But that, too, may be of little help since many pesticides are designed to distribute themselves throughout the plant. In the long run the only solution is a ban on all cancer-causing pesticides.

## Accidental nuclear war

Astrogeologist Eugene Shoemaker of the U.S. Geological Survey has hypothesized that the explosive breakup of a small asteroid as it enters Earth's atmosphere could be mistaken for a nuclear blast and thus trigger a global nuclear war. According to Scott Thybony of the National Geographic News Service, Shoemaker says an exploding asteroid produces a large fireball and shockwaves. About 20 years ago an object, probably an asteroid, exploded with a half-megaton force over the south Atlantic. The U.S. Air Force initially thought it was a nuclear attack. Shoemaker is concerned because such explosions have a very high probability of occurring every few decades.

## Angel of death, we pray...

The "Pray for Death" movement is back in vogue among segments of the Christian right, according to People for the American Way, a liberal advocacy group in Washington. One of the first pray-for-deathers to attract national attention was right-to-lifer Rev. R.L. Hymers of Los Angeles. In 1986 he hired a plane to pull a banner that urged people to pray for the death of Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. And this year, after Justice Harry Blackmun's surgery for prostate cancer, Hymers prayed that Blackmun be taken off the bench in "any way that God sees fit. I don't know if our prayers will be answered. The answer will come if he dies in time for President Reagan to appoint someone who is capable of the job." But the most notable convert to the pray-for-death movement is presidential candidate and television evangelist Pat Robertson. When out stumping he has repeatedly maintained that social problems in the U.S. "would be solved if Justice Marshall, Justice Brennan and Justice Stevens were to be either retired or promoted to the great courtroom in the sky."

## Pat Robertson, bushel in hand

Only God knows, but Robertson may be in a heavenly fix. According to reports in the Norfolk-based *Virginian Pilot* and the *Ledger-Star*, Robertson has disowned a message he once received from the Lord. Robertson wrote in his 1972 autobiography *Shout It From the House* that on God's advice he did not campaign in



Jeannette and Bernard Benally of Red Valley Navajo Reservation, Ariz. Bernard worked as a uranium miner for six years. He has lung cancer.

## Radiation poisoning—the victims speak

When Janet Gordon talks about radiation and the people in her home of Cedar Lake, Utah, it is with bitter indignation. "We're the nicest people there are, and there is no reason we should be treated this way." She was referring to the 35 years of nuclear testing that have resulted in statistically high cancer rates among the Nevada Nuclear Test Site's "downwind" residents.

Gordon is the director of the National Committee of Radiation Victims and a principal organizer of the First Global Radiation Victims Conference held last week in New York City. Along with searching for solutions to the problems faced by radiation victims and the planet Earth in general, the conference spotlighted the long-ignored stories of the victims themselves. Moving testimony was given by survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Canadian uranium miners, German nuclear power plant workers and "downwinders" in western U.S.

"We were never told what the real effects of radiation were, and when we asked, government and industry officials denied that our health problems could have been caused by the nuclear tests," said Gordon. "Now I know better."

It was not until 1979 while working to stop uranium strip mining that she began to understand that radiation in the environment could have caused the cancer of the pancreas that killed her brother 18 years earlier. After seeing the documentary *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang*, Gordon realized that the government's public relations firms she had seen as a child were bold attempts to convince people that nuclear radiation was harmless.

It has been this brazen unwillingness of government and corporate officials to respond to the needs of radiation victims that convinced many at the conference that public testimony provided their only recourse.

"They've taken no responsibility at all," said Gary Rush, a former security guard at Dresden Nuclear

Power Plant in Morris, Ill. "I have received nothing in way of a response from either the nuclear people or the government."

For three months in 1977 Rush worked at Dresden. Once, while stationed at the bottom of the #1 reactor, water lines carrying contaminated water broke, resulting in a knee-deep spillage. In another incident Rush says he was exposed to enough spent fuel to cause a Geiger counter to malfunction when placed on his body.

Rush now suffers from severe sores on his feet and hands, eye and teeth problems and an ulcer. His daughter, born in 1981, has cerebral palsy. He believes these problems are linked to his time at Dresden.

After numerous appeals for compensation, Rush has received only denials of corporate neglect. "Either they're ignorant themselves or it's a big cover-up and we're the guinea pigs," said Rush. "It's all a money angle. Money comes first and life comes second."

Jeton Anjain of the Marshall Is-

Photograph by Robert Del Tredici from: At Work in the Fields of the Bomb, Harper & Row, 1987



lands testified that he thinks the U.S. military designated his people as test cases for the short- and long-term effects of radiation. Since the first Pacific Ocean nuclear tests in 1954, said Anjain, residents of the islands have contracted diseases and ailments never before experienced.

"My people were badly affected by the nuclear tests," said Anjain. "Today many of the children are handicapped. Some cannot walk, some cannot see. They say it was an accident, that things like this weren't supposed to happen. But this was not an accident. They wanted to see what would happen to people, and we were chosen."

Today residents of the Marshall Islands receive health care from the U.S. government, but Anjain said he thinks the purpose of the treatment is more to monitor the effects of radiation than to treat the victims.

In the western U.S., radiation victims also endure governmental denial and the pain of biological breakdown. Priscilla Peterson Empey believes her father's experience as a uranium miner in the '50s initiated a cycle of cancer within her family.

"My family worked in the Vandium mines in Marysvale, Utah. Because ventilation in the mines did not yet exist, his lungs would fill with dust so badly that when he blew on a Geiger counter it would go crazy," said Empey. "The cancer started in his lung and spread everywhere. He died in 1968."

Twenty-two other miners who worked with Empey's father have also died of cancers since the '50s. She also maintains that her brother's daughter, who was born with neuroblastoma, a cancer of the nervous system, is her family's latest radiation victim. The Vandium corporation never offered compensation for her father's death or acknowledged the role uranium may have played in his ailments. The Vandium mines were eventually closed, but not for health reasons.

Organizers hope this conference, the first of its kind, will make the subject of radiation victims acceptable for public discussion, thereby eliminating the embarrassment and discrimination victims often endure.

"The first step in solving a problem is recognizing it. Radiation vic-

tims do exist," said conference coordinator Kitty Tucker. "We think that gatherings such as these can have a very important impact on international efforts to end the production of radiation."

According to Tucker the conference will call for an immediate comprehensive test ban treaty, a phase-out of all nuclear weapons and nuclear industries, and the recognition and protection of all radiation victims.

For some, like Janet Gordon, continuing the fight for compensation and the end to nuclear production is a battle that is continually rejuvenated by an intense desire to halt the deaths of other radiation victims. But for Gordon's friend Gloria, a radiation victim, the struggle for both the rights of other victims and her own life eventually became too much.

Said Gordon, "It was on the fifth anniversary of Three Mile Island when Gloria called to tell me she was giving up. She said, 'That's what they want, isn't it, for us to die so they won't have to deal with us?' I tell you I'm losing people every day."

—Leon Lazaroff

## Minnesota balks under Democratic National Committee whip

This week the Democratic National Committee (DNC) will decide how it will punish Democrats in Minnesota, the only state that voted against Ronald Reagan in both the 1980 and the 1984 general election.

Last year Minnesota's notoriously independent Democratic Farmer-Labor Party (DFL) and the DFL-controlled state legislature moved up Minnesota's 1988 delegate-selection caucus from March 15 to February 23. They did so without permission from the national party. In September the DNC Compliance Assistance Commission imposed several "automatic" penalties against the DFL. As further punishment the commission has asked the entire DNC to vote to deny the six DNC members from Minnesota their automatic seats at the party's national convention, thus reducing the state's number of delegates to 80. The commission is taking similar action against South Dakota's Democratic Party for the same reason.

"I'm perturbed to say the least," said Ruth Esala, Minnesota DFL party chair and one of the states six DNC members.

And Sue Rockne, a Minnesota member to the DNC who stands to lose her automatic convention seat is outraged. "This is a straight power trip," says Rockne, a Zumbrota, Minn., feminist and the legislative director of the Minnesota Abortion Rights Council. She says the DNC wants to make an example of Minnesota not only to impose

party discipline but also to punish a state party with a history of grassroots rebellion.

In recent years Minnesota delegates to the DNC have challenged new party rules that obstruct party participation and discourage affirmative action. They have strongly opposed the party's rightward drift and its increasing reliance on big-shot fund-raisers and its predilection for telegenic candidates.

"Minnesota embarrasses some of the rest of the states because we're open, fair and democratic, and because we deliver our state for the Democratic presidential candidate in national elections," Rockne says. "Instead of being taken as leaders, we're punished as recalcitrant children. That's petty and it's ridiculous."

The controversy began last year when Minnesota's legislature passed a law that moved the state's precinct caucus date forward to February 23. The DNC had asked Esala, as party chair, to stop the law's passage. But Esala failed to block the date change. The Minnesota and South Dakota caucuses now are scheduled exactly between the Iowa caucuses and the new "Super Tuesday," in which 20 states, mostly Southern, hold primaries and caucuses.

National party rules say states must hold primaries within "the window" between the second Tuesday in March—Super Tuesday—and the second Tuesday in June. Waivers have traditionally been granted that allow Iowa and New Hampshire to select delegates in the first half of February. And for the 1988 season Wyoming and Maine also received waivers.

The party's strategy is to maximize the impact of Super Tuesday,

and thus help ensure the nomination of a candidate who can defeat a Republican in the South.

The sanctions against Minnesota were scheduled for a vote on October 7 in Washington, D.C., at the DNC's last meeting prior to the national convention. Already Minnesota has automatically lost representation on three convention committees—platform, rules and credentials. In addition, the Minnesota delegation will get absolute last choice in hotels and floor seating space at the Atlanta convention in July.

A DNC spokesman denies Minnesota is being singled out. He insists that party rules must be enforced if they are to have meaning.

But Paul Wellstone, a political science professor at Minnesota's Carleton College and another automatic DNC delegate who faces losing his seat, promises a fight right up to the convention.

Wellstone admits the rules fight "isn't really a justice struggle." Minnesota's legislature changed the caucus date in hopes the state would become more important in the primary process and attract campaigning presidential candidates.

Nonetheless, he says Minnesota might pull a page from the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party book. In 1964 that group marched into the Democratic Convention to protest party exclusion and segregation.

"If push comes to shove, we'll come into the convention hall and take our seats," Wellstone says. "We've got a progressive, open state Democratic Party counterposed with a hierarchical, and now punitive, national party."

—Brian Ahlberg

1966 for his father, a Democratic U.S. senator from Virginia. "I yearned to get into the fray and start swinging, but the Lord refused to give me the liberty. 'I have called you to my ministry,' he spoke to my heart. 'You cannot tie my eternal purposes to the success of any political candidate...not even your own father.'" But in October 1986, when his life story was reissued, there was no mention of God's words, only Robertson's "I yearned to get into the fray and start swinging."

## "A little three-day invasion"

Though not praying for the death of Nicaragua's President Daniel Ortega, Republican presidential hopeful Robert Dole thinks it might be useful if the Sandinista were removed from the scene. The senator from Kansas told the *Milwaukee Sentinel* that during his recent trip to Central America he attended an evening get-together at the home of Costa Rican President Oscar Arias. Dole said he, Arias and other Central American leaders talked about Ortega. "I've got a feeling he [Arias] would like Ortega to go away, if somebody came down there and sort of blew him away. But they're not going to say that publicly." When asked what he meant by "blew him away," Dole answered, "I don't mean kill him." What was he then implying? "I've got a feeling a little three-day invasion wouldn't make anybody unhappy down there, if you just overthrew Ortega." Costa Rica's Ambassador Guido Fernandez through his spokeswoman told *In These Times*, "There is absolutely no truth to the words Sen. Dole attributed to President Arias. The president has said so himself."

## Administration wives read no evil

Selective illiteracy is the balm that makes the mornings of at least one Washington wife a little bit brighter. "I've learned not to read a lot of things," Ursula Meese, wife of Attorney General Edwin Meese told *US* magazine. "I don't need that irritant. Why read it? If I'm upset, then he gets upset. I think you'll find a lot of Washington wives don't read the newspapers when things get to be too much... You always have to have something to look forward to. The idea is not to get so involved in the immediate problem, whether it's a trial or testimony, and have something else to aim for... You have to try to maintain a balance. What's happening to you today is not the end-all. Regardless of how they're persecuting you or running a town hanging for your husband—there is tomorrow."

## Give a dirty word a home

In an effort to fight censorship at Canadian borders, the Canadian Committee Against Customs Censorship of Toronto is putting up for adoption banned words, complete sentences and, for the right price, whole books. Two dollars will make you the foster parent of words like "glorp," "cock," "tongue" and "rosebud." Give \$10 and you can nurture a complete sentence. For \$50 an entire book is yours—perhaps *The Story of O* by Pauline Reage. And for each banned book that receives a dozen adoptions, the committee promises to defend that novel in court.

## The National March on Washington

Hundreds of thousands of people are expected to attend what unofficial sources are saying could be the largest demonstration for civil rights in the nation's history—the October 11 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. The march is demanding an end to discrimination against the nation's estimated 25 million lesbians and gays, people with AIDS and ARC (AIDS-related complex) and all others who suffer discrimination. To help accomplish this, marchers will call for support of the Civil Rights Act of 1987 that amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 1965 to include protection against discrimination based on "affectional and sexual orientation." The march was also called to protest the Supreme Court's *Hardwick vs. Bowers* decision upholding the right of Georgia to police people's sexual lives. Further, the marchers, some of whom will be people with AIDS, are demanding that the government combat the AIDS crisis by adequately funding research, drug testing, education and health care for AIDS patients. The other highlight of what will be six days of capital activity, is an October 13 civil disobedience action in front of the Supreme Court. Encouraging southern California's gay and lesbian community to come to Washington and march, Boston city councillor David Scondras recently said, "In Washington we face a critical test. Millions who cannot be there will judge by our numbers and energy whether we will be able to push forward the frontiers of human rights, or slide back into the straitjackets waiting for us."



## Is Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young saving souls, or is he selling his own?

By Salim Muwakkil

**T**HE COUNTRY WITH THE WORST HUMAN rights record in this hemisphere has struck a deal with a long-time champion of human rights. Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, whose passion for social justice bathed this country in a glow of international respect during his reign as U.N. ambassador under Jimmy Carter, has offered to train the National Police of Guatemala at the city's police academy. This agreement, which extends the notion of strange bedfellows to new dimensions, has infuriated human rights groups, perplexed the mayor's

### FOREIGN POLICY

erstwhile civil rights colleagues and embroiled Georgia's largest city in a rancorous debate about foreign policy issues.

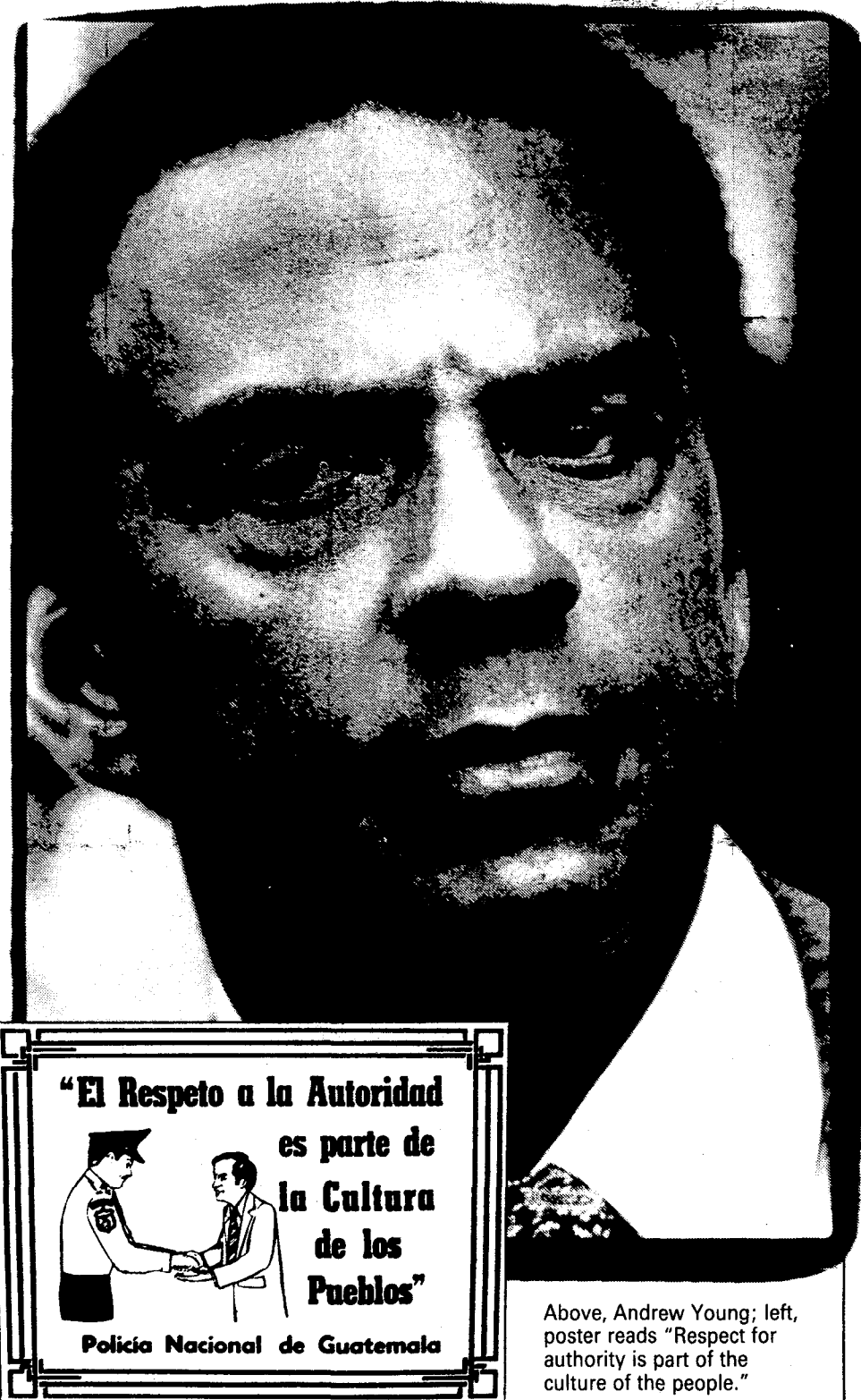
Young made the controversial offer in response to Guatemalan Interior Minister Juan Jose Rodil's request for Atlanta's assistance in professionalizing the country's National Police. Rodil admits he chose Atlanta because he thought that Young's international reputation as a champion of human rights would help counteract his country's brutal image. The Guatemalan government, led by Vinicio Cerezo—the first elected civilian president in more than 20 years—insists that such an image change is warranted.

Most human rights groups strongly disagree. "We vigorously oppose Mayor Young's plans to train the Guatemalan National Police because they're involved in major acts of repression and brutality," says Jean-Marie Simon of Americas Watch, a New York-based organization that monitors human rights problems in Latin America. She argues that the country still deserves its 1985 standing as this hemisphere's worst violator of human rights. It's been estimated that about 100,000 civilians in this Central American country of 8.3 million were eliminated under a succession of military dictatorships over the last 20 years.

"The police are subordinate to the notoriously repressive Guatemalan military and its centralized command center, called G-2," Simon says. "Better training would only provide them with more effective means to repress the population." While Simon concedes the situation has improved under Cerezo's 21-month tenure, she maintains the improvement has been minimal. "The armed forces remain a law unto themselves."

Months before the 1985 civilian election, the regime of Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejia began establishing a parallel military government in the countryside, according to human rights groups. And a few days prior to Cerezo's January 1986 inauguration, the outgoing army rulers decreed a general amnesty that prevents the prosecution of security forces involved in human rights violations from 1982 to 1986—the period of a particularly murderous counterinsurgency campaign.

In the first months of his administration, even supporters of Cerezo's own Christian



Above, Andrew Young; left, poster reads "Respect for authority is part of the culture of the people."

Democrat Party were killed or "disappeared," according to *Amnesty International Report 1987*. "Despite some improvement in the human rights situation," the report adds, "there was minimal progress in determining responsibility for the tens of thousands of cases of torture, 'disappearance' and extrajudicial execution of people from all sectors of Guatemalan society which had occurred during the previous two decades of military government."

**Young's motives:** Young is convinced, however, that the Cerezo government is making a serious attempt to democratize the country and that the U.S. should do all it can to aid that process. He bitterly criticizes the Reagan administration's support of the contras and urges Democrats to formulate a more coherent alternative policy. "I would hope to get the Democratic Party committed to working with democracies like Guatemala, like the Philippines, like Argentina," he said at a recent news conference. "If there's hope

for democracy and peace in Central America, it is in directing your attention to where democracy is trying to work."

Young, who was an aide to Rev. Martin Luther King as well as a congressman and U.N. ambassador, says he has three major purposes in mind in establishing relations with the Guatemalan government: to fulfill Cerezo's request for police training; to increase his role in determining the foreign policy direction of the Democratic Party, which is holding its 1988 convention in Atlanta; and to increase business and tourism ties with the most populous country in Central America. He argues that his civil rights and ambassadorial experiences have taught him much about social change and that those lessons may provide crucial answers for fledgling democracies.

"Young's wrong if he thinks he can work in a bad system for a positive effect," says Frank Cummings, a professor of chemistry at Atlanta University and a sanctuary member

who's worked closely with Guatemalan refugees. "He believes his civil rights experiences are transferrable and relevant in all situations, but he's naive and just plain wrong," Cummings says. Young's purposes for the Guatemalan connection are self-serving and actually contemptuous of that country's beleaguered citizens.

"He's trying to develop political influence on the backs of a long-suffering people," Cummings adds. "An agreement to train their police would be a cruel, ironic slap in the faces of thousands of Guatemalans who still don't know where their relatives and friends are, but who know beyond a doubt that it's not the National Police who'll help find

**Mayor Andrew Young's recent offer to train the National Police of Guatemala at Atlanta's police academy has infuriated human rights groups, perplexed the mayor's erstwhile civil rights colleagues and embroiled the city in a rancorous debate about foreign policy issues.**

them." There are many ways that Atlanta can support democracy in Guatemala, Cummings argues, but police training is not one.

Young insists that Atlanta is particularly sensitive to the issue of retraining abusive police because of its history. Young's predecessor, Maynard Jackson, inherited a police department that was well known for its racist brutality. But through persistence and innovative effort, Jackson, who was also the city's first black mayor, brought the department under control.

"The mayor is way off base with that analogy," Cummings counters. "Very few people say that Cerezo is a bad person. It's just that his power is limited; he does not control the National Police. In Atlanta, the change came in from the top, while in Guatemala, the armed forces are the top."

In an August 6 Op-Ed piece in the *Atlanta Constitution*, Steven Donziger writes that while Cerezo's request for professional training in police procedures is well-intentioned, it is unrealistic. "The difficulty is that the Guatemalan police have little experience combatting crime but plenty of experience committing it."

**An element of racism:** But Stoney Cooks, Young's former aide and the one who arranged the mayor's meeting with Minister Rodil, contends the time is ripe for police aid. "There's a civilian government in place and the region has rejected Reagan's contra doctrine. Now's the time." Cooks, who runs a Washington, D.C.-based international development firm, says that in precarious situations like Guatemala, either the civilians gain control of the police department or the military continues to run it. "The more support the civilian sector receives, the more

Continued on page 10



By Pippa Green

NEW YORK

**H**UMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA, shrouded by South African government press censorship, are being brought into sharp focus again in the U.S. Late last month, Bill Cosby, popular TV star and comedian, launched a high-profile campaign to free South African detainees.

Cosby, who is said to be particularly moved by the detention of children in South Africa, and Joseph Garba, Nigerian ambassador to the U.N. and chairman of the Special Committee Against Apartheid, presided over the New York City ceremony. To kick off the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign, eight U.S. mayors handed over keys to their cities.

Although the campaign has started on a high note, its organizer, the American Committee on Africa, hopes it will mobilize ordinary Americans in a renewed anti-apartheid drive. Campaign co-ordinator Dumisani Kumalo, an exiled South African journalist, said churches, synagogues, trade unionists and activists will collect thousands of keys, which will be dumped on the doorstep of the South African consulate on October 13 to symbolize the demand to "Unlock Apartheid's Jails."

About 30,000 South Africans have been held at some stage since the state of emergency was declared in June 1986. Of these, anti-apartheid groups estimate, 10,000 have been children.

Detention without trial has been used by the government to break internal opposition to apartheid. But it has also become its international Achilles heel. The U.S. campaign was launched in the wake of a recent four-day international conference in Harare on "Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa," which focused on widespread allegations of mistreatment of children in detention.

"This is one way in which we can break the wall of silence imposed by South Africa's censorship of the news. That is why it is so important that Cosby—an internationally known personality—is heading the campaign. While Pretoria tries to keep South Af-

## South Africa has detained thousands of children since June 1986.

rica out of the papers from inside, we are making sure we keep it in the papers here," said Kumalo in an interview.

**This is not all right:** At the ceremony, Cosby, who is honorary chairman of the campaign, stressed its seriousness: "Think about your child in the U.S. and what may happen to it when it goes out. Many things may go wrong, but certainly it will not be picked up by government forces, who will carry it away and torture the child. Certainly parents here don't have to go to jails, saying, 'My child is lost,' only to be told that it is not there.

"What I'm talking about is a law in South Africa which says this is all right."

The mayors of New York City, Washington, D.C., Boston, Wilmington, Del., Trenton, N.J., Hartford, Conn., and Providence, R.I., attended the press conference, as well as Richard Berkley, mayor of Kansas City, Mo., and president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Handing over the key to New York City, Mayor Ed Koch called on the media to continue to cover events in South Africa even though live footage of the civil unrest is ban-



Breaking "the wall of silence": Bill Cosby and Nigerian U.N. Ambassador Joseph Garba kick off the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign.

## A U.S. campaign to stop Pretoria's war on children

ned by the South African government. "You should put people on the networks who can describe what's going on—people like Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South African Anglican Archbishop and Nobel Prize winner) or Allan Boesak (an anti-apartheid cleric).

Marion Barry, mayor of Washington, D.C., said it was "outrageous" to detain thousands of people who opposed apartheid. To loud applause, he said the city government of Washington, D.C., was considering a bill to rename Massachusetts Ave. Nelson and Winnie Mandela Plaza.

The Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), a South African civil rights group, estimates that 1,500 to 1,800 people are currently being detained under emergency regulations, of which about 300 are 18 years or younger. In the past children as young as nine have been detained.

The South African government has tried hard to prevent detention from becoming an issue. The media may not report detainees' names without police confirmation, nor may they cover any security force action. Earlier this year emergency regulations made it illegal even to campaign for the release of detainees. It was a measure clearly aimed at pressure groups like DPSC that have played a pivotal role in keeping international protest against detention alive.

DPSC, formed in 1981 when a group of distraught parents of detainees established a mutual-support network, has carefully monitored detentions and the treatment of detainees. The vast majority of detentions, says the DPSC, have been aimed at people involved in alternative power structures in the black townships. Thousands of rank-and-file members of community organizations

particularly street committees that were set up in opposition to the government-created black local authorities, have been detained.

**Bearing the brunt:** Other targets have been members of the country's largest anti-apartheid organizations, the United Democratic Front and trade unionists affiliated to the largest black trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. The black youth bear the brunt of detention, according to DPSC. "The security forces operate on the basis that all youth (between 15 and 18) are a 'threat to public safety' and therefore a legitimate target for detention, assault or even shooting. Youth aged 18 and under have consistently been a third or more of detainees," says a DPSC document.

DPSC has collected hundreds of affidavits from detainees alleging ill-treatment. According to the organization, detained youths are frequently made scapegoats for violent incidents in the townships, and are assaulted in an attempt to make them confess. One 16-year-old Soweto youth said in a sworn statement that he was arrested in August of last year while visiting a hospitalized friend who had been shot by the police at a funeral.

On August 2, says the DPSC, "he was taken to Protea Police Station [in Soweto] where he was chained to a pole in the yard. There was a chain around his neck, he was handcuffed and his feet were crossed and chained together.... While he was chained he was beaten with a thin iron pole, slightly thicker than a golf club. He...told them [of a shoulder operation he had] and was hit in the region of that operation. He was told he would be killed because he was a 'freedom fighter.'"

A man from the Kagiso township outside Pretoria testified that he had visited his 18-

year-old son who was detained at Diepkloof Prison earlier this year. "He told me...that he was taken from his cell and put into a small room where he was beaten every day by white policemen using *sjamboks* [whips].... Before being put into the room, while in a cell with other detainees, they were teargassed almost every day.... When I saw him he was in pain from being beaten. He was crying and said that his shoulders and whole body were sore...."

**Physical evidence:** According to the National Medical and Dental Association, an association of anti-apartheid South African doctors that treats released detainees, 72 percent of their patients said they have been physically assaulted. Doctors found that 97 percent of those bore marks consistent with their allegations, including bruises, whip marks, ear-drum perforation, signs of electric shocks and even gunshot wounds.

It is the publication of statistics like these that has disconcerted the South African government. Stung by its image as child-jailer, it released several hundred detainees in June, hoping perhaps to quell the clamor. But news of detentions—particularly the detention of children—continues to filter through the curtain drawn over the civil conflict in South Africa.

Months before the U.S. campaign was launched, senators and congressmen, including Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and presidential candidate Paul Simon (D-IL), wrote strong letters to South African President P.W. Botha objecting to continuing detentions and demanding the release of detainees.

The campaign against detentions may not only give the anti-apartheid movement here new life, but may also force the South African government to be more circumspect in its crackdown. And it will certainly make the task of the South African government and its U.S. allies more arduous than before. □

**Pippa Green** is a South African journalist currently based in New York.

IN THESE TIMES OCT. 7-13, 1987





François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl (center) pose for their "historic handshake."

## Franco-German war games and games politicians play

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**N**O SOONER HAD IMMINENT SUCCESS IN THE Soviet-U.S. Euromissile negotiations been announced than German and French soldiers were out in the potato fields playing a game meant to show that even if the Americans went home, the gallant French were ready to spring to the aid of the Germans in repulsing the Soviet hordes.

The first joint Franco-German maneuvers were called *Kecker Spatz* after a legendary "saucy sparrow" that lent a helping beak to building the spire of Ulm Cathedral. The script was written mainly by the French, who cast themselves in the starring bird role.

The scenario went like this: The "Reds," treacherously violating the neutrality of a "Green" country (Austria), crossed the Danube and were advancing into southern Germany ("Blue"). Overwhelmed, the German command called Paris. The French responded by sending 25,000 troops of the elite Rapid Action Forces (FAR), who luckily were not tied down intervening in Chad, Djibouti or French Polynesia. Put under German command, the FAR helicopters rushed to the scene and routed the enemy. The Reds were pushed back across the river.

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Meeting September 24 on a pontoon bridge on the Danube, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterrand climaxed the display of victorious military partnership with a "historic handshake," (which provided the event's major "photo opportunity").

On the German side and in Austria in particular, not everybody was thrilled with the scenario. It was clearly more political than military. Its implicit criticism of Austria's in-

## EUROPE

ability to defend its neutrality amounted to an interference in Austrian politics. The French don't want to miss a chance to warn the Germans away from neutrality on the Austrian model.

**It could have been worse:** According to the German daily *Die Tageszeitung*, the French had originally wanted to write a "pacifist uprising" into the scenario. Beleaguered by pacifists, the Bundeswehr (West Germany's armed forces) would have called in desperation for French helicopters.

Although pacifist attacks were omitted from the scenario, the French were afraid of meeting them in reality. French troops were equipped with a leaflet of instructions on how to confront those strange German pacifists. "If you are attacked, you have the right of legitimate defense, you also have the right to aid your comrades under attack." The code word for reporting a pacifist attack was *Rotlicht* (red light).

Some Germans planned a small counter-demonstration called "Saucy Dove" in the town of Kelheim, chosen for the "historic handshake." The Greens protested "against the militarization of Franco-German relations." But they were not allowed to hang their banner reading "Friendship without weapons" from Kelheim's main building, the historic *Befreiungshalle* (liberation hall), built by King Ludwig I of Bavaria to celebrate liberation from military occupation by the Napoleonic armies in 1813.

The plot of Saucy Sparrow was strained by the French need to show that they were ready to come to the aid of the Federal Republic, but only in an emergency, and not

as part of NATO. French forces regularly stationed in Germany remain behind a Rotterdam-Dortmund-Munich line set by then-President Charles de Gaulle when he took France out of the integrated NATO military command 20 years ago. Bonn would like to integrate those French forces into NATO defense plans. Paris still says no.

In 1983 Defense Minister Charles Hernu set up FAR on the model of U.S. rapid deployment forces. It looks like a typical overseas intervention unit, but Hernu stressed that it was set up to come to the aid of West German allies on the Eastern front. Saucy Sparrow was meant to convince the skeptical Germans that FAR really could do the job.

Technically, it could have been worse. At least three French soldiers were killed and five gravely wounded in helicopter and other accidents. The "red" enemy had to wait around so long to be found by the gallant defenders that some of the red vehicles' batteries ran down. Still, our side won.

**Cross purposes:** Politically, however, the French and German military were at very fundamental cross purposes all along.

Defense Minister Manfred Wörner and the rest of the German defense establishment endorse Franco-German cooperation as a way to strengthen NATO and the Atlantic Alliance. The French tend to present it as a necessary alternative to NATO and the Atlantic Alliance, which they portray as being abandoned by the U.S. Whatever the truth of the matter, taking on the role of Germany's nuclear partner to replace the Americans is an interpretation assumed to appeal to French public opinion. Few Germans, on the other hand, would be willing to trade the Americans for the French.

In strategic terms, the Bundeswehr's constant goal is to draw the French into the "forward defense," close to the East-West border. German military planners want to push the French forward so that French neutron bombs would be fired onto non-German territory. The German officers have an understandable distrust of the French strategy of sitting back to watch and perhaps fire nuclear warning shots if things go badly on the German battlefield. The Bundeswehr saw the joint maneuvers as a way of getting the French command to think more about conventional rather than nuclear warfare.

The main French motive is to attach the West Germans to the French before they drift into a demilitarized, neutralized Central Europe. The French are searching for a formula that would preserve a role for their nuclear weapons, their best defense against the risk of being reduced to junior partners of the Germans.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that in organizing Saucy Sparrow, "German perfectionism and French ideas of prestige rubbed each other too often the wrong way." The German commanding Gen. Werner Lange complained that the French neglected the preparation of everything except public relations.

The French daily *Le Monde* said: "Up until the last minute, this grandiose and in strictly military terms passably useless project came close to collapsing... The differences between the two armies showed up in all their crudity."

The Germans thought the French were silly to ban NATO commanders John Galvin and Wolfgang Altenburg from observing the exercise to stress that this was a Franco-Ger-

man and not a NATO event. There were also differences in attitude toward the observers from the Warsaw Pact countries, present as part of the new confidence-building measures agreed on in Stockholm. The East Germans and Czechs complained that the French officers were uncooperative in providing explanations, in contrast to the West Germans.

The only major departure from the script was Mitterrand's speech at Kelheim announcing that talks were underway to set up a joint Franco-German "Defense Council." Both Bonn officials and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac were surprised and annoyed by premature announcement of a project still under discussion. Observers assumed that Mitterrand had jumped the gun to grab the headlines and show that he, not Chirac, was the key figure in the crucial matter of Franco-German cooperation.

Nobody could yet explain how the tasks of the "Defense Council" would differ from those of the Franco-German Commission on Security and Defense set up five years ago to coordinate strategic policy, military cooperation and arms cooperation.

**What's at stake:** So far Franco-German military cooperation has primarily been a matter of arms cooperation. A success story is the Exocet missile, half-German and half-French, but sold under the French label the better to satisfy both French pride and German law prohibiting arms exports to tension areas. In the hands of the Argentinians and the Iraqis, the Exocet has gone to glory by striking British and American warships.

The current big project is a horrendously expensive anti-tank helicopter. The French arms industry is suddenly losing its protected Third World markets and desperately needs such joint ventures to stave off total ruin.

Joint arms deals are old, but military cooperation, as exemplified by Saucy Sparrow, is something new. The pending Intermediate Nuclear Forces accord limits Soviet and U.S. weapons, not those of the allies. Franco-German military partnership can be a way to pursue the arms buildup (or "modernization") rather than negotiating big mutual arms reductions in Europe.

At stake is what is meant by "Europe." Influential peace researcher and Green member of parliament Alfred Mechtersheimer sums it up this way: Disarmament initiatives unify Europe, East and West, while Franco-German initiatives mean arms buildups and the strengthening of bloc divisions.

Moreover, adds Mechtersheimer, "Every step in Franco-German military cooperation is a step toward nuclear cooperation." But the basic problem as he sees it is "the structural incapacity to defend" Germany. In the nuclear age, he notes, each country tries to "export its defense to another country because with modern weapons a country cannot be defended on its own territory." Thus the Soviet Union, the U.S. and France have all tended, in their own interest, to plan to wage nuclear war on German soil.

Some German leaders, disillusioned by American leadership, are indeed turning toward the French. But Mechtersheimer, who knows such milieus, observes a tendency of conservative southern Germans to say, "Don't leave us with the French, they would exploit us worse than the Americans."

Franco-German reconciliation is certainly too important to leave to the military. □



By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

**J**EAN-MARIE LE PEN, JUT-JAWED LEADER OF the National Front, has become both France's national disgrace and a national sport. As national disgrace, he peaked by insinuating during a September 13 radio interview that the so-called "revisionist historians"—who are neither revisionist nor historians—might be right when they deny that Jews were exterminated by the Nazis in gas chambers.

In answer to questions, Le Pen "wouldn't say the gas chambers didn't exist," but he personally "hadn't been able to see any" and knew that the question was "debated by historians." He had not studied this "detail" of World War II, a conflict that otherwise interested him passionately, he said.

Pressed to judge the genocide of the Jews, Le Pen skirted around the word "genocide" and said "hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions" of Jews were killed along with millions of non-Jews. The clear implication was that the Jews were simply war casualties like any others. The secondary, anti-Semitic implication lurking behind Le Pen's remarks is that the Nazi extermination of the Jews is an invention of the propaganda machine of international Jewry.

**First and foremost ideology:** If the doubt, promoted by more or less veiled Nazi sympathizers, as to the existence of the gas chambers has made a certain headway in France, this may have something to do with the style of political debate in France, which is much more concerned with ideological classification than with facts.

The gas chambers are not a matter of "revelation" or ideological preference, but of historic fact. Yet in the chorus of reprobation that followed Le Pen's description of the gas chambers as a "detail," there was, as usual, very little recollection of the facts, which are readily available. The film *Shoah* was widely viewed when it was shown over television during the Klaus Barbie trial last July. The French translation of a German book documenting the gas chambers was published in 1984 under the title *Les chambres à gaz, secret d'Etat*.

But such sources are rarely cited. Thus when someone like self-styled revisionist historian Robert Faurisson states that he was unable to find any gas chambers in German concentration camps, most people are not able to retort that (1) most of the gas chambers and industrial extermination of the Jews were located in Poland, not Germany, the better way to keep the activity secret, (2) the Nazis destroyed the gas chambers as the Red Army or Western allies approached, and (3) there were gas chambers even in concentration camps not specializing in extermination, such as the one in the Natzweiler-Struthof camp in Alsace.

And they cannot retort that one was built especially to help Professor August Hirt, director of the anatomy institute of the University of Strasbourg and an SS Hauptsturmführer, to constitute his collection of about a hundred "skulls of Jewish Bolshevik commissars" in order to study the physical characteristics of the "Jewish race" before it was all gone.

Such facts are so incredible that a very cool pedagogy is needed to explain the death camps to generations born after Nazism.

Le Pen's attitudes are all of a piece. Anti-Semitic innuendo is his stock in trade, and his followers have been casting doubt on the genocide of the Jews for a long time. But while probing as usual for a vein of popular



Arch-conservative Jean-Marie Le Pen: a national disgrace and a national sport.

## National Front leader Le Pen sings an old anti-Semitic song

prejudice, Le Pen this time struck the alarm bell that sent virtually every politician in France to the battle stations. For the first time even the conservatives who have accepted the National Front in local government coalitions moved to put Le Pen and his party in quarantine.

The vehemence of the unanimous condemnations from leaders of the conservative majority shows that they are particularly anxious to clear Le Pen out of the picture before the presidential elections next March.

The French style of dealing with Le Pen has not been to sweep away the bullshit with facts but to organize a *corrida* against the bull. The bull Le Pen shares the political arena with various figures who would like to win the honor of delivering the *coup de grace*.

**On the attack:** The left has gradually dropped its initial refusal to legitimize the National Front by debating it. This past summer party secretary Lionel Jospin became the first Socialist to agree to debate Le Pen. The debate was over radio, which removed Jospin's clear edge in looks. Up against the rightist demagogue in top form and on his best manners, a rather nervous Jospin proved to be a picador able to place barbs but not the matador able to dispatch the beast once and for all.

Communist Party presidential candidate André Lajoignie got his crack at the villain a week after the "detail" statements, when Le Pen was weakened by attacks from all sides. Lajoignie was matched against Le Pen in a debate umpired by Jean-Luc Seguilleon over Channel 5 in a sinister decor midway between a boxing ring and a discotheque.

Lajoignie had the makings of the matador. The stolidity of his peasant origins in poor and radical rural Limousin gave him a carapace impermeable to Le Pen's diatribes, and he waded into the attack with photos of concentration camp victims and the dust jacket of the record album of Waffen SS songs edited by Le Pen. Le Pen responded with uneasy mocking laughter and the standard raving that the Soviet Gulag is as bad as Nazi camps and still there. On that level, Le Pen was the weaker of the two.

Lajoignie began his presidential campaign last June by declaring that the Communist Party was best placed to win the common people away from Le Pen. The National Front's policies all favor the rich, but his tactic is to deceive ordinary people to win a protest vote, Lajoignie correctly pointed out.

Indeed, his plain style, if unbearable in Paris salons, was probably much more effective than Jospin's elegant rhetoric in convincing precisely the layer of voters the Communist candidate wants to win—or win back—from the National Front. Lajoignie evidently had another goal in mind in agreeing to debate Le Pen: to cut out a useful role for the Communist Party alongside the Socialists in a reunited left. During the debate he called on workers not to be fooled by the National Front but to vote "for the Communists or the Socialists."

Yet the media will not let Lajoignie be the matador that finishes off Le Pen. The morning after the debate the press, with the exception of the Communist daily *L'Humanité*, was unanimous, along with the other TV channels, in putting Lajoignie and Le Pen in the same sack. The other channels had an in-

terest in downgrading a production of Channel 5, jointly owned by right-wing press lord Robert Hersant and Italian TV tycoon Silvio Berlusconi. A large proportion of the French public cannot yet receive Channel 5 broadcasts. Newspaper headlines told them the next morning that the Le Pen-Lajoignie encounter had been "the zero degree in politics," "stupid and mean," and "the shock of two extremes."

To a large extent the media have built up Le Pen in order to tear him down. The rise and fall of the rightist demagogue is meant to be part of the didactic process carried on by opinion-makers to wean the French away from ideological politics. TV news broadcasts and most of the press are consistent in attempting to isolate the "two extremes" from the political process. This means a certain equation of the National Front with the Communist Party. Thus Lajoignie could not be allowed to score points against Le Pen, only to be equated with him.

Media friendly to President Francois Mitterrand are credited with initially building up Le Pen in order to split the right. The calculation is as follows: By winning away from 5 percent to 10 percent of the right-wing vote, the National Front presents the right parties with a dilemma. Either they accept the National Front in a coalition or they lack a majority. At that point part of the right may split away and form the "center" needed by the Socialists to build a moderate centrist majority without the Communists. The growth of the "modernizing center" is what the elites think France needs most.

**Is this a dangerous game?** There seems to be a consensus among leading intellectuals that although modern racist and anti-Semitic ideas largely originated in France in the 19th century, France is structurally immune to the victory of such ideas. France is a state, not a nation based on an ethnic identity. Thus racist nationalism is contrary to the multi-ethnic nature of France. The French state was built up over the centuries by expansionist acquisition of territories as ethnically diverse as Celtic Bretons, German-speaking Alsations, Italian Corsica and Basque regions. More recently, the population has been renewed by massive immigration to the point that today a third of French citizens are of foreign origin.

For more than a century French racists have admired "Nordic" or "Aryan" stock, perceived as the aristocratic minority in France. This racism was to some extent a 19th-century perpetuation, by pseudo-scientific arguments, of the mystique of "noble blood" defeated by the French Revolution. Such ideas of Germanic superiority were much more dangerous when they got to Germany. The French racists' biggest thrill was when they could admire their German masters during the Nazi occupation.

Le Pen belongs to that line of French admirers of Germanic superiority, and his "Nationalism" is resolutely European: decadent France needs to be wedded to German energy. But Le Pen seems to be out of luck. His American hero, Ronald Reagan, is on the decline and is agreeing with the "Evil Empire" to cut back nuclear missiles. And the Germans seem to have abandoned their warlike virtues in favor of peace. In France itself the classes susceptible to Le Pen's ideas are assumed to be declining as a result of economic transformations.

France is more like the U.S., where racism thrives on the differences that prevent it from becoming the dominant doctrine. Or so hope the enlightened classes in France. □

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# Young

Continued from page 6  
secure it'll become."

Cooks explains that an urban crime wave in Guatemala is being used by the right wing to discredit the Cerezo regime's law-enforcement policies. By legitimizing and upgrading the country's police services, he says, "we can neutralize those right-wing criticisms. We must at least be willing to allow Guatemalans to work toward democracy in their own way, using their own style."

Cooks maintains that an element of racism also taints the argument. "White groups will concede black leadership on foreign policy issues concerning Africa, but that's about it. These groups act as if they know everything there is to know and we're naive know-nothings who've got it all wrong. They seem to forget that Young was an ambassador with

extensive experience in international diplomacy. He's travelled widely and is very knowledgeable about global problems, especially problems involving democratization.

"Moreover," Cooks adds, "he's widely respected in international circles, particularly in the Third World, as a negotiator of extraordinary skills."

He says there are positive changes taking place in all of Latin America and that human rights groups are justifiably suspicious of those changes, but, at the same time, they're often unwilling to help those changes occur.

**Staking new ground:** Young appears to be formulating a foreign policy line that positions him between the anti-communism of the Cold War and the anti-interventionism of the Jesse Jackson Democrats. It's a strategy that also places him at odds with most black leadership. Thus far, however, only Rev. Joseph Lowery of the Southern Chris-

tian Leadership Conference has taken Young to task for his Guatemalan adventurism. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) remain mute on the subject, and aides of Reps. Ronald Dellums (D-CA) and George Crockett (D-MI), two of the CBC's most outspoken members, say they're unaware of Young's plans. Frank Watkins, long-time aide of Jesse Jackson, says he's aware of the controversy but wishes to add nothing to it.

It's clear that Young is tilling the field for the emergence of a new moderation in black politics. And it's probable that many black politicians will find some worth in his moderate vision; it will allow them to comfortably refute the oft-made charge that blacks are reflexively anti-American in their foreign-policy stands. But the Atlanta mayor's new direction may have a much more dangerous effect on the lives of the Guatemalans. ☐

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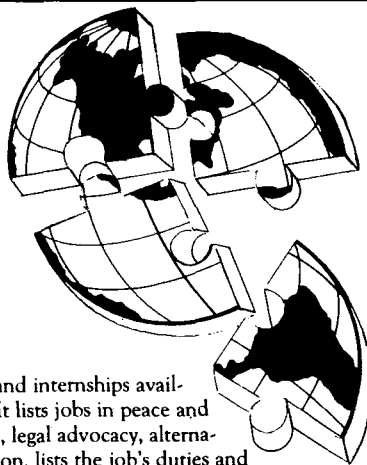
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Translated by Alexander Amerisov

MOSCOW

Political and intellectual questioning is spreading rapidly in the Soviet Union, as the following transcript of a recent meeting at Moscow State University indicates. The meeting was addressed by A.I. Strelyanyi, economics and science editor of *Novy Mir*, one of the Soviet Union's most respected literary monthlies. Young Communist League members at the university made up most of the audience. Portions of the meeting were recorded, transcribed and smuggled abroad. Most of the transcript is reproduced here, with a few clarifying comments. —A.A.

**S**TRELYANYI: SOVIET CITIZENS' TOTAL ABSENCE of rights in years past brought us to a very low level of culture.... We cannot live this way any longer. We need democracy. A well-known economist sent us [the editors of *Novy Mir*] a letter. He says that history will not forgive us if we don't overcome present conditions in a single leap: We are standing in front of an abyss, and one cannot leap over the abyss in two jumps. Doing it gradually is the greatest threat to *perestroika* [Gorbachov's social and economic reforms]. To try instituting reforms gradually will ruin not only Gorbachov but also the reforms themselves.

*Perestroika* has plenty of enemies. Take the article "Conniving Figure" [*Novy Mir*, No.2, 1987. Its thesis is that Soviet statistics can't be trusted]. We don't care who says what about this article. We are not writing for bosses. But 70 years of monstrous lies are still making themselves felt. At one of the meetings, Gorbachov himself criticized me for publishing this article.

After his criticism, my friends started offering me help in finding another job. "Still on the job?" they were asking. So far, as you see, I am still working, and will continue to print what I think is necessary and important. This is our Russian trouble—always anxiously to be looking into our bosses' eyes to find out whether they like something or not, how they will react to this or that.

Still, one woman highly placed in the Party, after reading "Conniving Figure," called me and asked for the sources one of the article's two authors used that allowed him to come to such conclusions—meaning the material will be seen at the top....

Our press has been lying for decades now. Everyone knows about the lies, but people still retain respectful awe toward the press. People still hope, but as long as the press is not independent, to ask much of it is unrealistic. Although the media has done a lot already...it does not function in our country on its own initiative. What we have is the result of a new attitude by a new leadership.

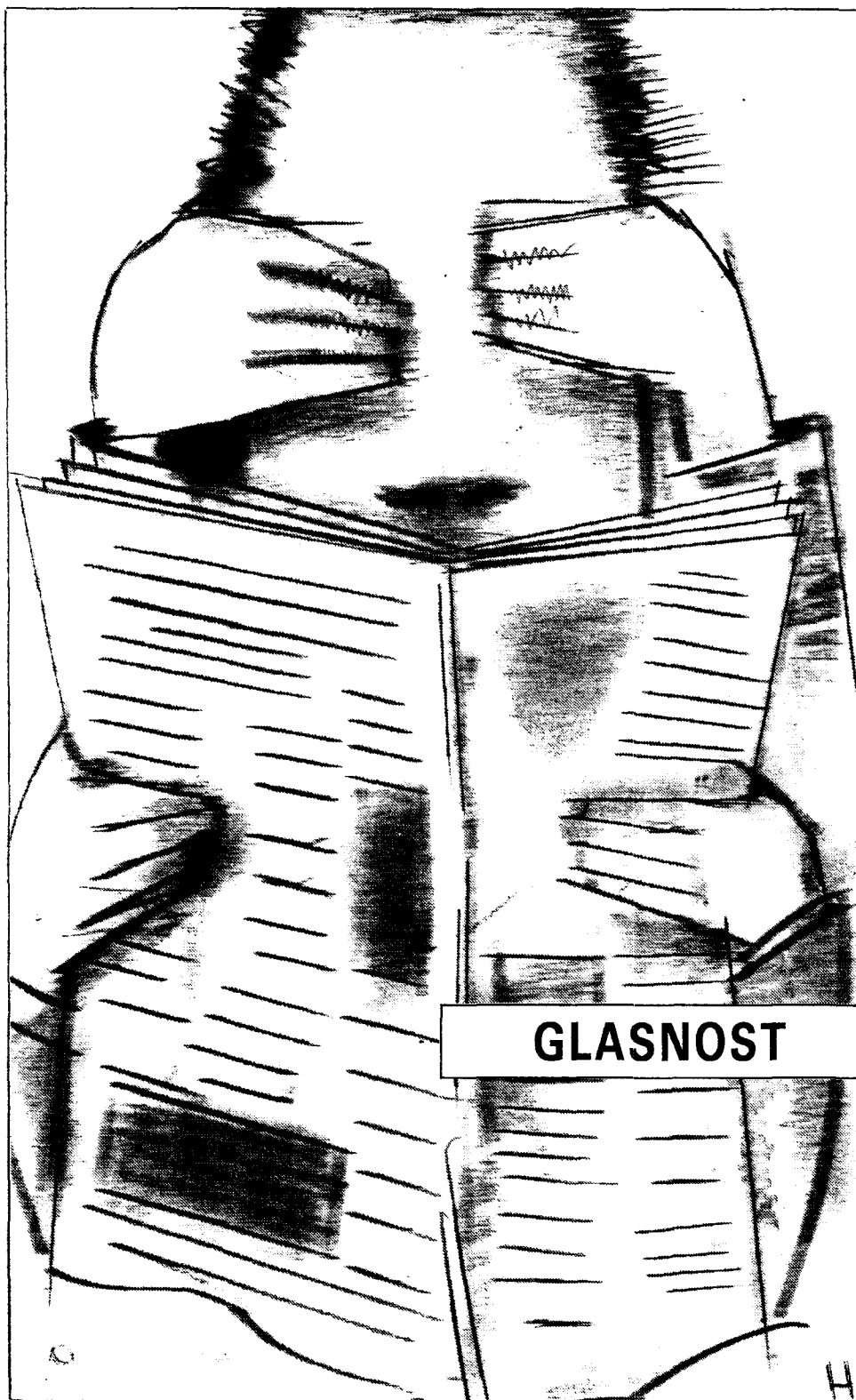
**Question from the floor: Do you think the media should be independent of Communist Party oversight?**

**Strelyanyi:** Yes. We need media independent of the Communist Party bureaucracy and the state machinery. An independent press is a press that would inform us about the killed and wounded in Afghanistan, would give the measurements of radioactivity levels at Chernobyl every day, would tell us about grain purchases, would sit at the meetings of the ruling Politburo and tell us what was being talked about....

**Voice from the floor: Such a thing will never be.**

**Strelyanyi:** If we want to eat our own bread and not American, there has to be an independent press.

# Soviet editor calls for free press as public discussion is on the rise



**Question from the floor: Is a law on the press being prepared?**

**Strelyanyi:** I don't know, because we still don't have *glasnost*. *Glasnost*, unlike freedom of the press, is not a right, but a privilege granted to people by the government for the time being. The successes of *perestroika* so far find their expression mainly in the difference between today's press and that under Brezhnev. But even there, differences are not that great.... Freedom is not simply the means to some end. Freedom is an end in itself.... The revolutionary character of *perestroika* means that people must be set free.... At present, our press is dependent on the Communist Party and the state bureaucratic apparatus.

**Voice from the floor: This is bullshit.**

**Strelyanyi:** You see how we are. An Englishman would have said, "Excuse me, I am not fully in agreement with you; I think differently." You, on the other hand, shoot from the hip. I am not against differences. The destiny of *perestroika* nonetheless depends on whether we go our separate ways, and

whether we end up on different sides of the barricade.

**Question from the floor: Does the Party really need such confrontation?**

**Strelyanyi:** Actually, under the brand-name "CPSU" [Communist Party of the Soviet Union], we already have two parties. [Strelyanyi probably refers to a deep division within the Communist Party between demo-

**A.I. Strelyanyi of the literary journal *Novy Mir* tells Moscow university students that while *glasnost* is a privilege, granted by Gorbachov, freedom of the press is a right too long denied.**

cratically minded liberal supporters of Gorbachov and so-called Russian Party or Russian National-Bolsheviks within CPSU who seem to have the patronage of Yegor Ligachov, a member of the ruling Politburo.]

**Question from the floor: Right now all the changes are being orchestrated from above. What do you think about it?**

**Strelyanyi:** Indeed, right now we see only revolution from above. We asked one of our people to prepare material for *Novy Mir* about "revolutions from above" from Peter the Great to Stolypin [Pyotr Stolypin—a reform-minded prime minister of Tzar Nicholas II early this century]. The conclusion—hesitation kills revolution.

**Voice from the floor: Aren't you too categorical?**

**Strelyanyi:** If nothing is changed, if there is no leap by the end of the '90s, the country's economy will collapse, just as it did right after the Civil War [1918-1921]. The winter [probably he means the winter of 1921] hit cities the worst and exposed all holes. A friend of mine, who is the first secretary of *obkom* [specifically, a boss of one region of the country, one of the several hundred extremely powerful top functionaries within the Soviet Communist Party, equivalent to a Bishop in the Catholic Church] is building villages around his city of a million people. He is being asked: what for? He keeps silent and just smiles. But to me he says: "Will it [economic collapse] be this winter or next?" This is the question that bothers him every night when he goes to bed. Just in case his city is freezing to death, he will be able to take people to these villages.

**Question from the floor: Is it true that during his visit to France *Novy Mir's* editor-in-chief Zatygin said that censorship already was abolished?**

**Strelyanyi:** This was a bit premature. Censorship exists, although to a lesser degree. Every publisher's office has a so-called political editor.... There is also a list of "forbidden subjects." ...We need to publish this list of "forbidden subjects" and open it for discussion. The secrecy around grain purchases! Secrecy from whom? From America? As if they don't know how much grain they sell us! This is not patriotism—this is an attempt to escape criticism.... The figures [on the numbers of killed and wounded in Afghanistan] are well known in the West to everybody! They are being hidden from us and not from the *dushmani* [the derogatory Soviet word for Afghan mujahadeen]. We must print everything...in every case we must ask the question: who profits from silence?

**Question from the floor: Who constitutes the social support base for *perestroika*?**

**Strelyanyi:** Gorbachov is too slow with expansion of the social support base for *perestroika* and this very well may result in the destruction of our cause and Gorbachov himself. *Perestroika's* social base now consists of highly qualified blue-collar workers, the scientific and technical intelligentsia, a portion of the literary and humanitarian intelligentsia, a segment of the upper-level Communist Party apparatus and economic managers. □

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## By Rachel Sternberg

MEXICO CITY

**L**AST WINTER WHEN BIRDS HERE FELL DEAD from the sky, the authorities remained silent until 10 days into the crisis. When they finally spoke, it was to reassure the public that only two species were affected, that these were migratory birds tired and hungry from their long trip, that they had ingested pesticides along the way. In short, smog in the Valley of Mexico was but a minor, if decisive, factor in their demise.

It was a typical if not brilliant display of what Mexico's ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) does best these days: damage control. Party leaders, struggling to pull the economy out of crisis, must hang on politically until their next presidential candidate—the certain victor—is safely chosen. For them it is an uncomfortable fact that the seat of government is not only the largest city in the world but also the most polluted (see accompanying story).

This was the second consecutive winter that birds had dropped dead. Laboratory analyses found lead, cadmium and mercury lacing their tissues. Their death belied government boasts that its year-old 21-point ecology program was a success, and nearly spoiled the effect of an ambitious 100-point program unveiled only two weeks before. The "100 Necessary Actions" were aimed at cleaning up air, soil and water in Mexico City and throughout the country. Some measures

dealt with the conservation and restoration of natural resources, others with the control of pesticides and detergents. For the capital there were plans to control auto emissions, factory wastes, garbage, sewage and noise.

Local ecologists have politely acknowledged the program as "serious," but no one expects it to be carried out. In May the government announced that 37 of the points were already in "full execution." "We're not so cheerful," says Manuel Fernandez, president of the Mexican Conservationist Federation. "The 100 points are...100 points. There is no timetable, no system of accountability, no enforcement mechanism." One might add that there isn't even a budget.

"The problem of pollution in Mexico reflects the pollution of the political system," says Homero Aridjis, president of the Group of 100, a collection of prominent artists and intellectuals who formed in 1985 to defend the environment. "Factories pollute because the inspectors in charge of making sure they don't are extorting money instead. Automobiles pollute because the traffic police ask money from motorists.... The problem will not be solved unless Mexico as a country makes a political change. There has to be more democracy, more plurality of political parties, respect for the vote of the citizen."

During thermal inversions, the horizon turns brown and the mountains that surround the city vanish from view. Even on good days, clouds of exhaust fumes envelop major boulevards, causing sore throats, burning eyes and aching heads. Environmental toxicologist Tom Dydek compared Mexico City data on suspended particles, nitrogen

dioxide and hydrocarbons with U.S. data. His findings? The air of Mexico City—on a good day—is as bad or worse than the air inside New York's Lincoln Tunnel.

Of all the local environmental atrocities, air pollution is the most politically volatile. However much garbage may be generated, whatever the strains on the sewer system, only air pollution is seen and felt by everybody. The children of the well-to-do are no more protected from bad air than are the children of the poor. In fact, families rich enough to live up in the hills on the outskirts of the city found themselves wrapped in the thickest smog during the valley's thermal inversions, when warm and toxic air rises as high as it can beneath a lid of cold air.

Lead, with its well-documented effects on the central nervous system, is a particularly emotional issue. U.S. researcher Stephen Rothenberg recently completed a pilot study on 50 Mexico City newborns. Nearly 70 percent had blood-lead levels higher than 10 micrograms per deciliter—a level associated with poor physical and mental development up to at least the age of three.

The government, predictably, plays down the health angle and refuses to admit that bad air may be killing people. It is true that people are not dying as they did in coal-burning London of 1952, when 4,000 lives were lost in five days, and the cause was clear. The secretariat of health says pollutants merely exacerbate prior health conditions. Others respond that if such exacerbation leads to death, then pollution is indeed fatal. Ecologists tend to get people's attention by citing large and unsubstantiated numbers—

up to 100,000 deaths per year.

It's clear that at best the government doesn't know and doesn't want to know the actual figures. One foreign researcher investigating the health effects of heavy metals, for example, was told by the government to drop the most controversial part of his study. Only in the past year have health officials begun epidemiological studies on pollution or examined possible links between air quality and mortality.

One genuine problem is separating the effects of pollution from other widespread health problems, such as malnutrition. Unhealthy people cannot withstand as much abuse as healthy people can. Some five million poor city residents who lack drinking water and plumbing are particularly vulnerable; so are workers who live in the shadow of smokestacks.

The government claims to have reduced levels of four major air pollutants. Yet critics say that the measures taken so far amount to mere tinkering with a complex machine that needs to be overhauled. For instance, the state oil company PEMEX last year introduced two new gasolines—one low-lead, one lead-free—to replace its high-lead brands. Lead emissions did fall, slightly, but levels of ozone and cancer-causing unburned hydrocarbons rose.

What needs fixing is bigger than Mexico City itself. Without solving rural problems it will be impossible to halt the city's anarchic growth. "Counterreform" agrarian policies dating to the late '40s have increased the misery of *campesinos*, while lower infant mortality rates have increased their num-





IN THESE TIMES A



Auf der heide  
at the Moscow  
Film Festival  
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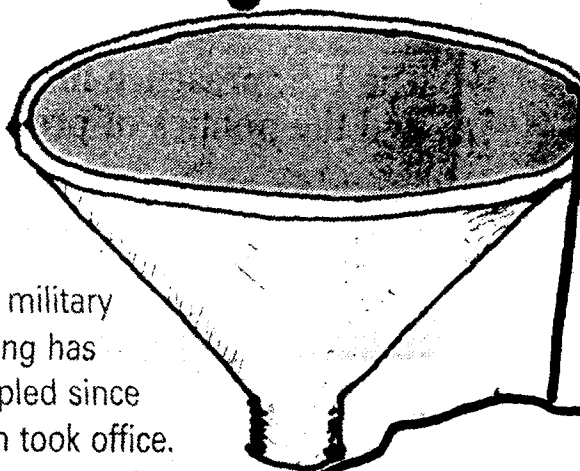
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American  
revolution  
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Secret military  
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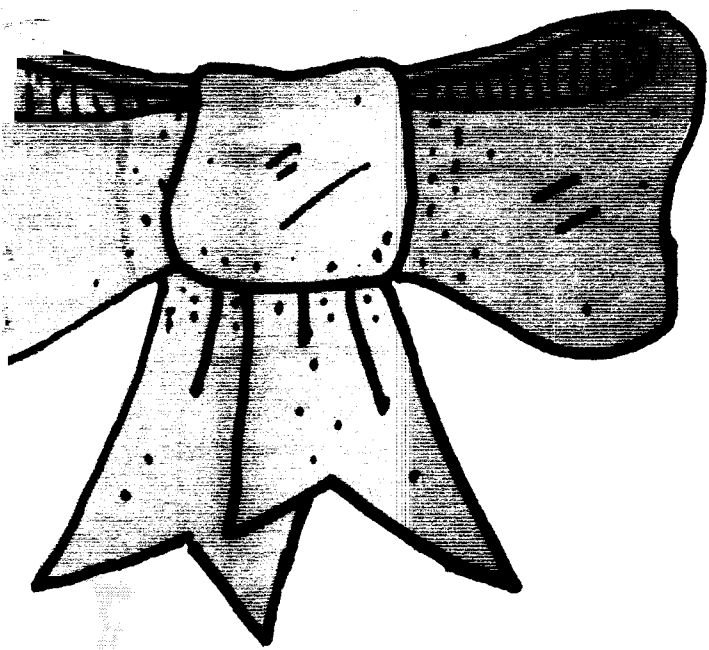
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bers. The government wanted them to come to the city and provide labor that would transform Mexico into an urban and industrial nation. It got what it was after, and then some. The city's population grew from 1.8 million in 1940 to 18 million today. The number of residents is expected to reach 28 million by the year 2000.

"The big issue is that the city grew, for historical reasons, in a way that it shouldn't have," says Irene Pisanty, plant ecologist at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "If the people in the countryside keep on starving, they will keep on coming here. At least here they can beg or rob."

Pisanty says the government should provide "more formal and real help to the countryside." Within the city itself, "it would be a matter of giving ecology the primary place. But you can't stop producing things. You can't stop PEMEX from working. We have to export oil. If oil is not exported, what will happen?"

**Where will money come from?** Mexico's severe economic crisis undoubtedly hampers the ability of all segments of society to combat pollution. *South* magazine estimates that the 100 Necessary Actions carry a price tag of \$100 million. Ecologists would like to see private cars supplanted by mass transit and the dirtiest factories moved outside the Valley of Mexico; but such measures are very expensive. The government is laboring under a \$100 billion foreign debt and triple-digit inflation. The nation's gross domestic product fell 3.8 percent in 1986 and another 2.0 percent in the first quarter of 1987. Authorities are afraid to do anything that might jeopardize a hoped-for economic upturn. So troubled industries stay where they are and working people continue to drive old cars that belch forth exhaust.

Despite President Miguel de la Madrid's much-touted policy of decentralization, the number of factory shutdowns can be counted on the fingers of one hand. In a February speech before the PRI's National Executive Committee, Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology (SEDUE) Secretary Manuel Camacho Solis explained why: "If it took us 50 years to create the capital goods that we have today, we cannot simply let them decline. We cannot dismantle what we have today in order to stay as we were—only with four times the number of inhabitants and higher expectations."

On days when air quality readings cross into the "very poor" range, the 271 worst industries are, by agreement with the government, supposed to cut emissions by 30 percent. No one believes that they do. This past summer the dissatisfied Mexican Ecological Movement (MEM) launched a campaign of symbolic "closures" that entailed blocking factory entrances.

Roughly three-fourths of Mexico City's air pollution comes from motor vehicles. City residents keep cars if they can because mass transit is filled to bursting and it can take two or three hours to get to work by public transportation. The government has reached an agreement with domestic auto manufacturers providing for emission controls on 1988 models. (Catalytic converters are no longer being considered, reportedly because PEMEX gasoline still contains too much lead to be used with them.) Few families, however, can afford to buy new cars and many find the cost of tuning their old ones prohibitively high. MEM estimates that only one out of every nine cars is in good condition.

Almost worse than the cars are antiquated city buses, which set a bad example. "The government can't tell individuals not to pol-

lute while they run buses that are the worst polluters," the Group of 100's Aridjis says.

The government is gradually replacing old buses with new ones, and the metro is being expanded. But the economic crisis supposedly keeps it from doing more.

Ironically, that same crisis could be what opens up the political process, according to Manuel Guerra, director general of the Pact of Ecological Groups and the Autonomous Institute for Ecological Investigations (IN-AINE). The PRI traditionally has controlled allies and opponents alike by passing out slices of a never-ending pie. But that pie shrank when oil prices dropped in 1981.

"There were no more slices," Guerra says. "They had to give something else—and that was political participation. The great risk for us is that the pie will start growing again."

**"They can't put us in jail":** It is only in this decade that ecologists have gained a voice. During the boom years of the '70s few heeded environmental warnings. But since the economic downturn, and with the subsequent fraying of the public nerves, dozens of groups have sprung up throughout the country—and have found audiences.

In Mexico City four or five major coalitions dominate the discussion. Most often quoted in the press is the Group of 100, which has unusual leverage due to the fame of its members, including Octavio Paz, Elena Poniatowska and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In Mexico, as in most Latin American countries, intellectuals command respect and influence in political circles. Poet and writer Aridjis, for instance, has held two ambassadorships. "They can't put us in jail," he notes.

In December 1982 the government responded to the ecological current by creating the Secretariat of Urban Development and Ecology. The very name betrays weakness, if not insincerity. "It is clear that in this ministry there exists a complex of interests," complains a MEM news release. "One cannot be plaintiff and judge. One cannot be just and democratic given two irreconcilable enemies such as ecology and urban development. As if determined to sabotage its own credibility, SEDUE also shares ad campaigns with PEMEX, indisputably one of the nation's worst polluters."

Then in 1985, the government created a National Commission on Ecology, rather like a presidential commission in the U.S., except that its independence is undermined by the membership of cabinet ministers who run the show. The commission has met only three times in two years. The "21 Measures" announced in February 1986 were generally regarded as useless—"the most shameful decree in the history of Mexican decrees," one ecologist called it—and the 100 Necessary Actions will have to prove their worth.

Pressure from ecologists led to a recent agreement with the city outlining practical anti-pollution measures, such as a sticker campaign for voluntary 20 percent reduction in private auto use. The legislature also recently approved constitutional reforms that pave the way for broad legislation on the environment, something lacking until now.

Ecologists regard these steps as a modest beginning. "What we really need is a national strategy of conservation," says the Mexican Conservationist Federation's Manuel Fernandez, "one that can guide public policy over the next 30 years or so, regardless of how many cabinet ministers may come and go."

Ecologists in Mexico are a fractious lot, with similar aims but diverse tactics that range from confrontation and mass mobilization to limited collaboration with government and industry. Every group claims to be

independent; all are highly critical of the government. They work together on various projects but snipe freely at one another.

This is not accidental. The PRI, a vast political machine that has ruled Mexico since 1929, knows very well how to confuse and coopt its opposition. Corruption is only one of its tools. In the late '60s and early '70s when social unrest fueled the left, the PRI bought its own leftist party—the Socialist Workers' Party, or PST—to participate along with the others.

The Mexican left has been hopelessly fractured ever since. Suspicions and counter-suspicions now plague the ecological movement. It has become a hall of mirrors in which no one can be sure where the others are standing.

The Mexican Conservationist Foundation, for example, is regarded as a "client of industry." Meanwhile, some say the MEM was set up by the government to forestall and control the rest of the movement. "The MEM makes waves on behalf of the progressive wing of the PRI," says one observer who requested anonymity. "Everything is planned. It has to do with power-sharing in Mexico."

When ecological leaders including Aridjis and Guerra signed a pact with the city, National Ecologist Alliance President Jorge Gonzalez Torres, himself accused of hidden ties to the government, expressed nothing but scorn. "The government wants to capture and control ecologists," he says. "They make shows without doing anything."

Guerra defended the action, suggesting that ecologists must take advantage of political openings created by power-jockeying among PRI functionaries. In this case Mayor Ramon Aguirre Velazquez presumably wanted to steal the ecology show from SEDUE Secretary Camacho Solis.

So why shouldn't ecologists use this to gain a little ground? "It was a positive development," Guerra says. "The government more or less recognized, for the first time, that we exist and that the programs we propose are not illogical."

To some extent, of course, every group

must work within the system in order to be effective. "The Mexican political system is very intelligent," Guerra notes. "It is not a monolithic structure. To the contrary, it is very dynamic. If you are outside it, you're an outcast. If you're inside it, you have many options."

Another question plagues the movement: can grassroots support be mobilized? The same one-party system that has made corruption and inept governance the rule has discouraged citizen participation. Most ecological groups see consciousness-raising as one of their chief tasks. For organizations like the research institute INAINE, this means inviting high-ranking industrialists and government officials to workshops on the environment. For MEM and the Alliance it means staging rallies and mass demonstrations.

The Alliance's Gonzalez is trying to create an Ecological Party in time for the 1988 presidential election, although he knows it won't win. "The party was born in the face of the necessity to do whatever could help to develop a social consciousness about ecology and to give people the opportunity to participate," he says.

Many of his fellow ecologists are characteristically suspicious, and worry that the new party will undermine the entire movement. "The best thing from the government's point of view is to create a political party with Jorge [Gonzalez] on top of it," one critic speculates. "Because once you create a political party in Mexico you can be sure the government will coopt the head of the party. Politics in Mexico is a very, very discredited profession, even more so than in the U.S."

It is said that pollution is the price Third World countries must pay for industrialization and development. Perhaps so, but leading Mexican intellectuals like Aridjis think the price has gone too high. "We have pollution that has exceeded the levels of tolerance," Aridjis says. "And if nothing is done, people will die. They are already dying."

□ Rachel Sternberg, former *In These Times* In Short editor, is now a freelance journalist based in Mexico City.

## On geography, history, weather and pollution

Pollution is part of the weather in Mexico City, where 30,000 industrial plants and 2.5 million motor vehicles noisily co-exist with 18 million people.

Geography and history are both to blame. Geography put the city on a dry lake basin more than two kilometers above sea level—where breathing is relatively difficult—and surrounded it with tall mountains that block the movement of air masses. History led one-fourth of the nation's population to this spot during rapid industrialization and uncontrolled growth, putting intolerable pressure on air, soil and water.

Nearly five million tons of chemical wastes choke the air each year, at least 75 percent from cars, buses and trucks and the rest from factories. There are 3,720,000 tons of carbon monoxide, 525,000 tons of hydrocarbons, 411,600 tons of sulphur dioxide, 153,800 tons of suspended particles, 132,000 tons of nitrogen oxides and 18,250 tons of lead, according to government-approved figures. Ozone, too, is abundant.

Meanwhile, at least 12,000 tons of garbage are produced daily, most of it left open to the skies. Solid and liquid toxic wastes of industrial and biomedical origin amount to an estimated 2,500 tons a day.

Since 30 percent of residents lack city services, runaway sewage is also a problem.

As anywhere, there are good days and bad days, and each season in Mexico City brings its peculiar hazards.

Winter is prime time for breathing in chemicals, thanks to thermal inversions. From October through January, cold air often settles over the valley like the lid on a saucepan, trapping beneath it warm and increasingly toxic air.

In February, March and April come spring winds, which clear away smog but blow in dust—some 20 tons per square kilometer per month. Dried fecal matter from slums becomes airborne and can contaminate food and water.

Ozone is the curse of April through June due to ultraviolet radiation from the summer sun that speeds photochemical reactions among nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and atmospheric oxygen. Then the rainy season of May through September leaves the skies washed clean but drenches sidewalks and trees with acid rain.

Only 2.8 square meters of green space remain per person, compared to 7 in New York, 16.7 in Paris and 35.9 in Chicago.

—R.S.



# ONLY INTERNATIONAL TERRORISTS MINE FOREIGN HARBORS!



## Persian Gulf fratricide

On September 20 the Reagan administration proudly announced the seizure of an Iranian ship, which was allegedly laying mines in the international waters of the Persian Gulf. This U.S. military action was accompanied by outraged administration denunciations of Iran for its wanton disregard of civilized behavior and its lack of respect for the rights of all nations to enjoy freedom of the seas. And, indeed, laying mines and blowing up non-belligerent ships engaged in peaceful commerce is not only reprehensible, but violates international law.

But wait. Isn't this the same administration that only a few short months ago was condemned by the International Court of Justice for laying mines in international waters off Nicaragua and for blowing up a non-belligerent ship engaged in peaceful commerce with that nation? What are we to make of this?

## So what else is new?

"If Judge Bork isn't in the mainstream, neither am I."  
—former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Warren E. Burger

## Facts and meaning of the contragate scandal

In a thoughtful article on the contragate scandal in the *New York Review of Books*, Theodore Draper explores James Madison's idea that "there are more instances of the abridgment of freedom of the people by gradual silent encroachment of those in power than by violent and sudden usurpation." As Draper points out, this very old idea has had dramatic relevance all too frequently since the end of World War II. First there was McCarthyism. Then Nixon and Watergate. And now the Iran-contra revelations.

But McCarthy was an outsider, who, though successful for a time in bullying the executive branch, never had access to its resources. His was a public demagoguery, as quickly brought down—when it had served its purpose—as it had shot up. And Nixon's Watergate, though "bad enough," was relatively easy to contain because it involved no issue that could be "camouflaged as a blow in defense of the republic." Contragate, on the other hand, involved the secret powers of the executive branch in pursuit of an agenda at odds with the policy of Congress and the wishes of the American people. The Reagan conspiracy, Draper writes, embodied a "toxic formula for putting the American body politic at maximum risk."

And Draper goes on to prove his assertion. Pointing out that by the time the Boland Amendment of 1984 was passed, "the Reagan administration had committed itself to the care and feeding of the Nicaraguan contras at all costs." He concludes that where there was a will to evade the amendment, there was always a way. "With enough ingenuity and bad faith, almost any law can be evaded or made meaningless," he writes, "especially by government officials who dedicate themselves to getting around the plain intent of the law."

That, of course, was exactly what Reagan intended. And it is what he succeeded in doing—with regard both to contra aid and to Iranian arms sales. These were policy decisions, made at the highest level. And they were carried out by subordinates who understood the president's intent, whether or not they received specific orders for all of their illegal acts. That is why Draper forcefully criticizes the Tower Commission report. Calling it a "crass cop-out," he says that by giving the impression that Reagan's "management style," rather than his policy decisions, was the source of the trouble, the report "seriously underplayed the culpability of the president and exaggerated the responsibility of his advisers."

All of this, in our opinion, is true. The Reagan administration misused its power in violation of its constitutional limits—not because of the irresponsible acts of rogue elephants in its midst, but because of ideological intransigence at the top.

Yet it is vital to remember that this abuse of executive power did not come out of the blue. It is the result of a long process that has shifted power from Congress to the presidency in this century, and of imperial policies inherently at odds with democratic government. Since World War I, when the U.S. emerged as a leading imperial power, more and more legislative prerogatives have been surrendered to the president—starting with the establishment of the Bureau of the Budget in 1921. After World War II, when the U.S. assumed the role of protector of the world imperial system, the president was given increased power in the conduct of foreign affairs by the creation of both the CIA and the National Security Council.

The Reagan scandal was not an aberration of policy. What Reagan tried to do in Nicaragua was entirely consistent with the policies of all administrations since Eisenhower. During the Eisenhower years, the CIA overthrew the democratically elected government of Guatemala on the excuse that it represented a Communist threat to our security, and the administration decided to oppose Vietnam's attempt to escape from French colonial domination. The difference is that in the early '50s, the U.S. was still an empire on the rise, whereas it is now an empire on the decline. Policies that were once almost universally applauded are now beginning to inspire second thoughts. Powers mindlessly surrendered to the president when "bipartisanship" was the watchword for the American Century are now appropriately being recaptured by Congress, so that our policies can be publicly debated. We are at the beginning of a hopeful process.

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"...with liberty and justice for all"

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# LETTERS

## Collared

THE DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP DAVID MOBERG'S ARTICLE, "Who are the 'new collars'?" (*ITT*, Sept. 9) discusses is not such a new phenomenon or bloc as it may, at first glance, seem. The emergence of this sort of group was identified early on by, among others, David Bazelon in his 1972 book *Power in America: the Politics of the New Class* and, more pertinently, by Michael Harrington in his 1967 book *Socialism* as "a new working-class stratum...middle class in its education and income, but often subjected to a production discipline like that of the workers."

In the introduction to my 1977 anthology, *On The Job: Fiction about Work by Contemporary American Writers*, I wrote: "The post Second World War period of reconstruction and the resultant 'baby-boom' led to a romance with the youth culture which flourished in the '60s and is now rapidly fading.... This country has rekindled its affair with the Worker—not coincidentally just as great numbers of the baby-boom era have finally entered the civilian work force. This transformation (from student to worker) has, in part, forced the current reexamination, for it has helped produce a new light-blue-collar class which is searching for fresh definitions of work."

The term "light-blue-collar class" fits the situation and is more to the point than the colorless label "new-collar workers" coined by Ralph Whitehead.

William O'Rourke  
Notre Dame, Ind.

## Can't be

YOUR GOOD LEFT-WING PAPER IS MARRED BY your retention of Alex Amerisov—a vicious anti-Soviet emigré who is a master distortionist of news of USSR—as a writer for the paper.

About one more ridiculous outburst from him such as this one about the "unemployment" in the USSR (*ITT*, Sept. 9) and I will cancel my subscription. Surely you know his purpose for this lie is to make it appear that capitalism isn't the cause of unemployment!

I also want to point out that it is illegal to advocate racial hatred in USSR, and so the existence of an "anti-Semitic" organization such as he claims exists is not possible.

L.C. Hayes  
Butte, Mont.

## Enough anarchists

THE RAGING CRITICISM OF JUDGE ROBERT BORK in your publication and others sounds like something out of "Jabberwocky." As well as I can understand, the arguments go something like this:

1. Bork is rigidly inflexible, and he changes his mind too much.
2. Bork won't protect the rights of people—he only protects the Constitution.
3. He is a hide-bound traditionalist, but he's likely to overturn previous Supreme Court decisions willy-nilly.
4. He imposes his own values on his decisions, but he sticks too closely to the "original intent" of the Constitution.

Bork is the first person to ever point out to me that the "right to privacy" is not mentioned in the Constitution. A lot of judicial arguments have used this as a basis. Where

is the outrage over how we have been hoodwinked by self-serving social engineers who would place personal values over the laws of our country?

If women's equality is threatened, we should hustle around and get the ERA into the Constitution where it belongs. Then Bork would defend it. The rush to ratify the ERA was called off because of sheer laziness on the part of its supporters. They were swayed by the argument that women's social progress had already made such gains the ERA was unnecessary. Bork reminds us that it may be necessary after all. What do we do—shoot the messenger?

The unpleasant reality is that Judge Bork has made more than 400 decisions while serving on the Federal Appeals Court, and not one has been overturned by higher authority. One has to be very careful of criticizing someone like that, because he is so smart that his critics end up looking second best. The only cautious criticism I would level at him, taking aim very carefully, is that because of his intelligence he is able to persuade people he is right when he may not be. If he later changes his mind, he has equally good reasons for his new judgment. In this respect he seems something of a loose cannon intellectually, but this is not a criticism of him on ideological grounds.

Critics of Bork should take heart: I'd be surprised if he even wants the job on the Supreme Court after going through all this artillery fire. He does not seem to be the type of man who will suffer fools gladly. If we succeed in hounding him off the job, we may lose some valuable insight into the workings of a constitutional democracy. But if the anarchists would rather have a puppet on the Supreme Court that they could manipulate to their hearts' content, that's O.K. with me, too. Politics for me is just a spectator sport.

Carol Bachelder  
Boise, Idaho

**Typesetter's reply:** Looks like the sport is being played so far away from your vantage point that you need binoculars.

## Soviet unemployment

SINCE OTHER NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES ARE already providing us with a clear picture of every drawback and obstacle which may conceivably afflict the current Soviet efforts at economic reform, it would be nice to be able to look to *In These Times* for an account showing why there is excitement as well as skepticism within the Soviet Union about the attempts at "economic restructuring." Whether or not the reforms are successful, inadequate, or incomplete, they are

clearly worth taking seriously.

As to the figures on projected unemployment which Amerisov cites (*ITT*, Sept. 9) from the journal *Sovetskaya kultura*, it may be worth noting that the article in which they appeared emphasized the importance of recognizing (1) that job reductions would result from hoped-for increases in efficiency and productivity, and (2) that this problem needed to be addressed. This article evoked so much concern among the journal's readers that the author, the economist V. Kostakov, was invited to clarify his position. In the February 1986 issue, Kostakov put forward the argument that, as the number of industrial jobs decreased, social and cultural services should become the new growth sector of the economy, with jobs created by expanding the number of pre-schools, mandating smaller class size with more teachers, and a step-by-step extension of maternity leave to a term of three years. (In this connection, it is relevant that the current Five-Year Plan extends the length of work-leave for women with children under the age of one year to a term of 18 months.) For Kostakov, some of the key problems relate to the male segment of the population. In his words:

"For the overwhelming majority, the inclination to drink is a kind of compensation for the undeveloped state of their cultural needs, for the monotonous dull way in which they spend their days off and evenings, and with their not knowing what to do with themselves, with their time and with their money. Two million workers in culture and the arts is an extremely small number for such an enormous country as ours! The comprehensive program for the development of goods and services envisages a substantial expansion in the system of cultural services."

For the Soviets, the question of job reduction appears to be a far more controversial issue both in practice and in principle than Amerisov suggests. At least so far, it does not seem to be the case that either unemployment or economic insecurity are a central aim of the reforms which are being attempted.

Esther Kingston-Mann  
Boston, Mass.

## A call to bisexuals

THE NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR Lesbian and Gay Rights October 11 is going to be the most impressive display of lesbian and gay pride and solidarity ever seen in this country. Can bisexuals afford to sit back and watch this event unfold on national TV? Not a chance. In August, the National Steering Committee of the March

on Washington approved a proposal for a National Bisexual Contingent, submitted by the East Coast Bisexual Network (ECBN). Now, bisexual men and women nationwide have to get out there and march as bisexuals.

These are dangerous times for bi's. Nearly every day we are treated to some nasty, biphobic media coverage of bisexuals and AIDS. Bi's are as victimized by the anti-choice/anti-sex agenda of the Reagan administration as are lesbians and gays. We confront the same hostilities, the same discriminations. The pending Bork Supreme Court appointment further threatens bisexuals' civil liberties.

Gay liberation is our liberation, so we have to work for gay causes at every opportunity. The list of demands drawn up by the March organizers express many of our concerns. However, bisexual and gay issues aren't identical. We can't let gays represent us in D.C. We have to go there ourselves, as bisexuals, to speak openly and vociferously as a separate and vital contingent.

Why travel to D.C. and melt into a gay affinity group or organization when you aren't gay or lesbian? Once we begin publicly to claim our bisexual identities we will no longer go unacknowledged or left out. The very fact that the March isn't called "The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual March on Washington" is symptomatic of the fact that we haven't been visible enough, as bi's, within the gay community.

Marching on Washington as bisexuals gives us our first chance to affirm our bisexual pride nationally. A pre-March gathering for the Bisexual Contingent is taking place early Sunday morning. Please get in touch with us if you'd like to march with the Contingent. Call (617) BIS-MOVE, or write March, c/o Boston Bisexual Network, P.O. Box 639, Cambridge, MA 02140. Or look for us on the rallying site; we'll be wearing red and carrying the National Bisexual Network banner.

Witness the birth of a national bisexual movement in Washington on October 11! Whatever the size of the bi contingent, it will be a proud contingent.

Lucy Friedland, Liz Nania  
National Co-ordinators for the Bisexual Contingent for the March on Washington

**Editor's note:** Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letter—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

## SYLVIA



## by Nicole Hollander



By Irving Weinstein

**W** E MAY, IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, BE guaranteeing employment by making government the employer of last resort. A number of currents appear to be converging to bring this about. The most important is the widening movement among the states, and in the Congress, to add a job component to welfare.

These developments throw into high relief the "Guaranteed Job Opportunity Act" submitted to the U.S. Senate by Paul Simon (D-IL). The act makes it U.S. policy for government to be the employer of last resort when all good-faith efforts to find employment have failed; it sets up specific machinery to implement the policy and allocates the necessary funds.

Nevertheless, while the bill is crafted to make it legislatively viable, this will not happen without the liberal/labor/left "coalition" taking the bill to its bosom and making it the centerpiece of a domestic program. For any law that guarantees employment—no matter how minimally aimed (and the Simon bill provides only minimum-wage jobs)—is certain to engender massive resistance. Will the "coalition" give the Guaranteed Job Opportunity Act the kind of support needed for passage? This is not at all certain. For the very same features that make the bill legislatively viable may well create a lack of enthusiasm. It is well to have no illusions on this score—both about the content of the bill and the possible negative reactions of elements of a potential coalition.

Most of the jobs to be created under the Simon bill—health aides, non-professional school workers, park attendants—already exist on various levels of local government and non-profit agencies. These workers are organized into unions, or are potential union members. Where state and local governments have sought to place welfare recipients into such jobs, already-employed workers and their unions have been rightfully concerned that the spread of "workfare" might circumscribe their own employment opportunities and undermine their pay scales and their struggle for improved conditions. That's why unions are reluctant to support "workfare."

This perception of threat (added to the punitive element in "workfare" where it is used to get society's "money's worth") seems to have created a strong tendency for "workfare" to become make-work or busywork. The task may entail useful work, but the level of performance that has become the norm is so minimal as to drain the job of its usefulness.

Sen. Simon has obviously wrested hard with this dilemma. He has sought to structure in elements that serve to allay the fears of employed workers and their unions, and at the same time to guarantee that the jobs to be created are real jobs. The selection of government jobs is made by a local committee made up of business, labor and government with both labor and business able to exercise a veto; the jobs to be created are expressly prohibited from displacing any currently employed person, including those on layoff, or impairing any existing collective-bargaining agreements; the jobs must be "new" jobs, ones that would not otherwise be conducted with existing funds.

The effort to guarantee real jobs includes



## Simon bill would move toward full employment

a definition of them as a "project," one that "will result in a specific product or accomplishment" and "capable of accomplishment within 18 months." The participant will not simply be attached to an agency's payroll where it would be convenient for the person to get lost in the shuffle or assigned some made-up task. Rather, participants will be part of a specific, identifiable activity created to engage them in purposeful work.

The bill also includes supportive services that "are necessary to enable an individual to participate." Such services "may include transportation, health care, special services and materials for the handicapped, child care and other services...." A definite educational component is built into the program. The participant must undergo a test for basic reading and writing competence, with those failing the test receiving counseling and instruction. Persons who do not have a high school diploma or its equivalent must enroll and maintain satisfactory progress in such a program. Moreover, the salary is actually better than the tie-in with the minimum wage would suggest. In addition to supporting services the participant would be covered by Social Security. The rules for food stamp and energy assistance eligibility would continue to be applicable and the participant would be allowed to work up to 16 hours per week on an outside job. While none of these enhancements of the minimum wage inherently guarantees that the jobs might not degenerate into busywork, taken all together they reinforce the intention of the bill to provide genuinely useful jobs.

Will the Simon bill be able to provide real jobs? In my opinion this distinction between real and make-believe jobs is crucial. A government-as-the-employer-of-last-resort jobs program that consisted primarily of busywork is not worthy of support. Indeed, the entire concept would be

hopelessly compromised and public support would inevitably erode. (We are defining a real job in terms of the regular job market, where usefulness need not relate to the quality of the job, the capacity to stimulate, to use a person's resources, or develop greater skills. Under this definition a person bagging groceries in a supermarket, or flipping hamburgers in a fast food restaurant is engaged in a real job.)

**A permanent underclass?** Let us assume that we have passed these hurdles, defused the issue of the potential threat to those already employed and their unions and have garnered their support and that the aim to provide real jobs is achievable. Still, are we risking the creation *through law*—combining a guarantee of a job with a limitation on its scope—of a two-tiered system of employment?

The bill leaves no doubt about the "last resort" nature of the government commitment. The system of government-guaranteed jobs is designed so as *not* to challenge the status of the regular job market as the "normal" avenue for persons earning a living.

If passed, the bill would constitute "actually existing" full employment, but on the lower rung of the employment ladder. This might not be significant were there assurances that the jobs of last resort were truly temporary, simply way stations on the road to better jobs in the regular marketplace. But there are no such assurances. And the persistence of high unemployment involving millions of people must be reckoned as being within the norm.

And while the above arguments are substantial, the case for support of the Simon bill remains.

A better bill, i.e., Rep. Charles A. Hayes' (D-IL) bill in the House, is hardly likely to pass Congress. Indeed, the extent both of the resistance to government guaranteeing employment and the labor movement's in-

ability to counter that is indicated by the fate of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Act, currently on the statute books. This law has been ignored by the president and Congress and there obviously exists no force capable of calling the lawbreakers to account.

We are then back in the "real world" of politics. We have a bill embodying the concept of the government as employer of last resort, a concept without which full employment cannot be realized; however, the concept is realized very imperfectly, carrying the risk of creating an inferior grade of employment and an inferior caste of persons filling such jobs. Do we go for the bill as at least a breakthrough in the concept, hoping to widen the breach as time, experience and political opportunity allow—or do we refuse to take the risk? In my opinion, the latter option would be giving up on effecting progressive change.

- We already have a two-tiered system of employment. Only it is divided into those employed and those not employed. It is against *that* two-tiered system that the Simon bill must be compared.

- The passage of the Simon bill need not hinder and in fact ought to encourage and revitalize the struggle for the implementation of Humphrey-Hawkins. The necessity and practicality of Humphrey-Hawkins would only be made more evident with a system of second-rate government-guaranteed jobs in existence, especially so were such jobs to show signs of becoming permanent "first resort" jobs for millions of people. Meanwhile, a government-guaranteed last resort job program would provide a cushion where a battery of full-employment measures could work themselves out in a non-emergency process.

In this scenario, passage of the Simon bill is the first installment of implementation of Humphrey-Hawkins.

- The struggle for passage of the Simon bill meshes with the fight to increase the minimum wage. The chance for success on this is good, and a minimum-wage increase would greatly enhance the attractiveness of the Simon bill.

**Superceding welfare:** Passage of the Simon bill would permit superceding the welfare system for those able to work. Confining the function of the welfare system to those unable to work will take away a weapon used by conservatives against those accused of undermining the work ethic. This is a must if we are to make headway among conservative workers and middle-class people.

- A "Guaranteed Job Opportunity Law" will act to soak up the "surplus" labor force. This, in turn, would exert upward pressure on the wages of lower-paid workers. Overall, labor's ability to struggle for "fair shares" in the marketplace would be greatly enhanced.

- Perhaps most important would be the real, but unquantifiable, day-to-day impact on the lives of millions of young people, adult men and women and marginally employable.

Passage of the "Guaranteed Job Opportunity Act," given all its limitations, has the potential of marking a significant reform of American capitalism. ■

Irving Weinstein works for the United Federation of Teachers and has written for *Dissent*.



## High unemployment in U.S. assures high profits

With the official civilian unemployment rate at 6 percent, many establishment economists insist that we now have full employment. This view is supported by neither fact nor logic. Even the 7.2 million people counted as unemployed by the Labor Department underestimates the amount of unemployment. It excludes many who want, but do not have, a full-time job, as well as "discouraged workers," who have given up actively seeking a job due to repeated failure to find work. If discouraged workers and part-time workers who want full-time work were included among the unemployed, the unemployment rate would be 11.4 percent. But even relying on the official rate, a simple comparison with past years and other countries reveals the failure to achieve anything like full employment.

The U.S. has achieved something approximating full employment three times in the past 50 years. In World War II the official rate fell to under 2 percent, and in the Korean and Vietnam wars to under 3.5 percent. A rate as high as 6 percent was experienced in the '50s and '60s only during recessions. Japan and Sweden, on the other hand, have maintained official rates under 3 percent for decades in the postwar period, even during the generally depressed '80s. Some other industrialized capitalist countries have had similar records for long periods of time.

Using official statistics, 2-3 percent is a reasonable definition of full employment, since that seems to represent an irreducible minimum of "frictional" unemployed—people who are in between jobs at any given time. Since the evidence shows such a rate is attainable, why has the U.S. failed to achieve it, except during wars?

**Common explanations:** One view blames the unemployed: "If a person tries hard enough, he/she will get a job." Upon hearing such a claim, a leftist might retort, "The fact that millions of people are unemployed is *not* the result of individuals failing to try hard enough to find work."

Surprisingly, both assertions are correct. Consider the analogy to the party game musical chairs. The participants circle a bunch of chairs, which number one less than the participants. When the music stops, everyone tries to sit. The one person who does not get a seat is out.

It is true that, had the person left standing tried harder and been more aggressive, he or she would probably have gotten a seat. But such a change in an individual's behavior would not have made any difference in the "seatless rate." A more vigorous job search by the unemployed would not create more jobs in the economy, any more than more aggressive behavior in musical chairs would create an additional chair.

Another view that blames the unemployed cites the growing proportion of women and people of color in the labor force. The reasoning goes that since those groups have higher unemployment rates than white males, their growing numbers have raised the unemployment rate.

But growing participation of women and people of color in wage labor is no obstacle to full employment. The most rapid increase in labor force participation by those

two groups, during World War II, was accompanied by the lowest unemployment rate on record. While racism and sexism do indeed decrease job opportunities for the affected groups, an economy that expands rapidly enough will pull members of all groups into jobs.

Many people worry that rapid technological change, replacing workers with machines, may make full employment impossible. This is a fallacy. Technological change raises output per worker, and thus it reduces the workers needed per unit of output produced. But the amount of output produced is not fixed. If jobs are eliminated faster than economic growth creates new ones, then unemployment rises. But this is not a necessary outcome. If output rises fast enough, more jobs are created than are lost.

The historical evidence does not support the technological unemployment thesis. The high unemployment rates in the U.S. in the '70s and '80s have been accompanied by very slim increases in output per worker. The '20s and the '60s experienced unusually rapid rates of technological progress, and unemployment rates were relatively low in both decades. This experience is not accidental; a rapid rate of increase in output per worker boosts profits, which stimulates capitalists to expand output and hire more workers.

**The "benefits" of unemployment:** High unemployment persists in the U.S. because it helps to assure a high corporate rate of profit. Capitalists always face the problem of how to keep wages low enough and labor productivity high enough to gain an acceptable profit. Unlike earlier class societies, in which the dominant class had the formal power to coerce laborers, under capitalism workers are "free." They don't have to work for someone if they don't choose to.

Corporate ability to keep wages down, and to control workers on the job effectively enough to keep productivity up, rests on a delicate balance of power between capital and labor. While many social institutions reinforce the power of capital over labor, persistent high unemployment is the most important. High unemployment keeps labor weak, permitting corporations to set wages and control the labor process so as to ensure a high profit (as long as unemployment does not rise so high that selling the goods becomes problematic).

Full employment has the opposite effect. Capitalists must suddenly compete among themselves for workers. Labor finds itself in a powerful bargaining position, able to win big increases in wages and benefits and to keep the pace of work reasonable. This explains why, when war production brings full employment, the government normally slaps some kind of controls on wages.

Without the stimulation of war production, capitalist economies naturally tend to maintain a significant amount of unemployment. When normal economic growth soaks up the unemployed, profits decline, and capitalists respond by cutting back on production, bringing a recession and restoring the unemployment rate to a level more favorable for profit-making. The individual capitalist merely responds to the incentive of profitability, and the result is a self-regulating mechanism for the system.

## EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

By David Kotz

But then how have some capitalist countries been able to operate at full employment for long periods of time? The answer is that, in each such country, the government has undertaken policy measures to assure rapid economic growth, while at the same time some institution, other than unemployment, has operated to maintain a rate of profit acceptable to capitalists.

**The Swedish and Japanese cases:** In Sweden the Labor Party government has used a combination of stimulative fiscal and monetary policies, together with a labor market policy to match unemployed workers with available jobs, to assure continuous full employment. At the same time,

**Historical evidence does not support the idea that technological change causes unemployment. Full employment is possible under U.S. capitalism, if economic policies are changed.**

workers and capitalists engage in highly centralized wage bargaining, through the federations of labor and of employers. The unions have negotiated wage increases that, while providing a steady growth in living standards, have also allowed an acceptable rate of profit. The unions have not pushed wages up as fast as their favorable bargaining position might have permitted, in order to pursue long-term goals.

In Japan the workers' political parties are

relatively weak, and the capitalist-dominated Liberal Democratic Party has controlled the government since the U.S. occupation ended. For a variety of reasons Japan was able to maintain an extremely high rate of economic growth in the postwar period. This growth process pulled people off the land and into wage labor in industry at a rapid rate. Significant immigration into Japan was not permitted, so the rapid growth led to prolonged full employment.

This did not lead to wage pressure on profits because the capitalists were able to defeat the militant sections of the labor movement in the decade after the war (with help from the U.S. occupation authorities). Militant unions had been based mainly in transportation and mining, and after their defeat, the new, rapidly growing manufacturing industries were able to create what would be called company unions in the U.S. With corporate managers actually running the unions, Japanese capitalists were able to make acceptable profits despite full employment.

**Full employment in the U.S.?** Full employment is possible under U.S. capitalism, but it would require significant changes in economic practices. The government would have to use stimulative fiscal and monetary policy, and probably also labor market policy, to assure a job for everyone. A big government jobs program would be the quickest, surest means to full employment.

But that would not be enough. Some kind of new arrangements in labor-management relations would be required to assure that the relation between wages and labor productivity would leave an acceptable profit in addition to providing acceptable improvements in pay, benefits and working conditions. Some institution would also be required to prevent a disruptive inflation from developing. The next "Everybody's Business" column will explore the possibility of full employment further.

## AMERICAN PICTURES

### MOST SUCCESSFUL CAMPUS EVENT OF THE 80's:

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Shown 10 times in Harvard, 7 in Yale, 6 in Cornell, 4 in Stanford, 4 in Georgetown, 3 in Dartmouth, 3 in Brown... and 15 times in Berkeley!

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### BACKGROUND

The show is based on the 5 years a young Dane, Jacob Holdt, hitchhiked over 100,000 miles in the USA. He bought film for his camera by selling blood twice weekly. He lived in more than 400 homes - from the poorest southern sharecroppers, to some of America's wealthiest families (Pabst, Rockefeller). He joined the rebellion in Wounded Knee, followed criminals in the ghettos during muggings, sneaked inside to work in southern slave camps and infiltrated secret Ku Klux Klan meetings. While working with prisoners he saw two of his friends assassinated. By the time he returned to Denmark 12 of his American friends had been murdered.

"Not since Jacob Riis' book of social criticism *How the Other Half lives* has there been as powerful a record of American living as American Pictures. Its presentation at the Cannes Film Festival created a sensation."  
*The San Francisco Film Festival.*

"What makes American Pictures so disturbingly powerful is the cumulative effects of Holdt's photographs combined with his outsider's analysis of the dynamics of poverty and oppression in the U.S."  
*Los Angeles Times*



**A show and a book of a Danish vagabond's journey through the underclass**

"Powerful, intense"  
*New York Times*

### THE BOOK

The book, which is based on the show, is an international bestseller. The Village Voice revealed that the U.S. State Department grew worried about its impact overseas and commissioned photographers to present the "other side" of America. Written in a personal tone it is now a popular classroom supplement in American schools. 800 photos, the bulk in color.

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**Spiked: How Chain Management Corrupted America's Oldest Newspaper**  
By Andrew Kreig  
Peregrine Press, 237 pp., \$19.95

By Paul Bass

**F**ROM 35 MILES AWAY, IT READ like a journalist's dream: a paper that devoted room to exploring issues, that offered freedom to conjure images. It consistently broke hot statewide stories. Its judicious use of the wire service stories—plus expanded out-of-town bureaus of its own—propelled its national and international coverage far beyond the reach of its competition. Every journalist in Connecticut who wasn't working at the *Hartford Courant* after Times-Mirror (parent company of the *L.A. Times*) bought it out in 1979, seemed to have a resumé sitting there.

So why did every *Courant* reporter you bumped into complain about miserable working conditions? Why were Hartfordites grumbling? Why did rumors soon begin of efforts to launch a competing daily, then, years later (and this time successfully), two competing weeklies?

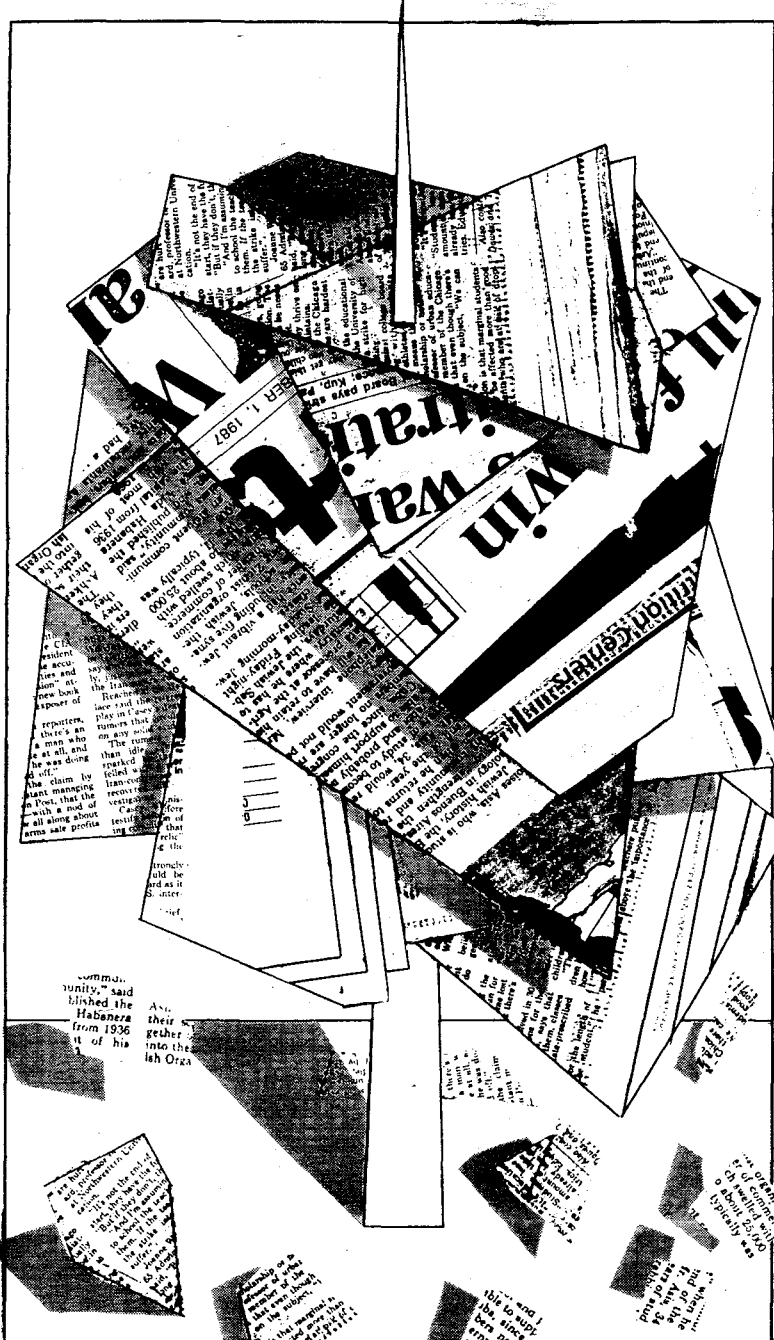
Good questions. Until now, I had only hunches. A new exposé by 14-year *Courant* veteran Andrew Kreig—called *Spiked*, a Seymour Hersh-style, meticulously researched attack on a powerful institution—spells it out unmistakably in its subtitle: "How Chain Management Corrupted America's Oldest Newspaper."

**A national trend:** Kreig argues that chain management hasn't corrupted only the *Hartford Courant*, but has changed American newspapers nationwide by taking over profitable dailies in markets where the competition has died. Kreig's blistering attack argues that in assuming control of regional monopolies, media conglomerates have transformed these newspapers' role from agents of community empowerment to factories of distraction.

"These newspapers have tremendous impact on the public. Their judgments are often echoed by broadcasters and smaller newspapers in their areas, thus setting the public affairs agenda for entire regions," Kreig writes.

"The *Courant's* experience holds implications beyond journalism. Conglomerates in the mid-1980s were taking over and transforming local businesses of all sizes and types. Factories, farms, banks, airlines and even community hospitals were all part of a shakeout having enormous impact on everyday life. Where can the public look for a frank appraisal of these developments? The media? The media is part of it."

Unfortunately, Kreig's evidence, beyond some persuasive quotes



## Local papers and the truth in chains

from media critic Ben Bagdikian, is all drawn from his experience at the *Courant*. I suspect his analysis of the disadvantages of chain ownership holds true at many, if not most, bought-out dailies. But not everywhere—in New Haven, long-time chain ownership has corrupted the "alternative weekly," but improved the daily, long the wretched mouthpiece of a viciously right-wing family dynasty whose crusades dated back to fighting the abolition movement in the 1800s. Since *Spiked* so urgently (and entertainingly) portrays the *Courant's* problems, one hopes it will spawn other, farther-reaching journalistic investigations of the subject from a national perspective.

**High hopes:** As an employee, Kreig owned part (a minuscule part) of the old *Courant*; employees and their relatives owned the paper. Like others, he saw hope in the \$105.6-million sale to Times-Mirror. Like many local dailies, the *Courant* was a bit too parochial. It needed higher standards, ambitious new blood, higher wages. There was dead wood on the staff. Man-

agement techniques were dated, too; with the *Hartford Times* now defunct, the *Courant* was a magnet for endless potential profit. Zoning meetings, real estate sale prices, sewer commission meetings...there must be more to newspapering than that.

Times-Mirror brought that something more by encouraging high-profile stylistic pieces and cutting back on all the sewer and zoning news in the 91 area towns the *Courant* traditionally covered. Manage-

**Conglomerates have been buying local businesses of all types. Where can the public look for frank appraisal of this development? The media? The media is part of it.**

ment sent reporters flying cross-country, abroad, wherever the big story of the day occurred. The cut-back on nuts-and-bolts municipal government reporting saved money. So did the scrapping of all the dead wood.

Surprisingly, the natives weren't grateful. They missed the "boring" news about their towns. Historically a civic-minded group, *Courant* readers depended on such in-

## JOURNALISM

formation to participate in the political life of their home communities. They had far greater potential to effect change in Manchester or East Hartford than in Bhopal.

Many reporters weren't pleased, either. They feared for their jobs. After the first wave of major changes bombed, and a new management team came in, they had to adjust to yet another new regime ready to impose ideas honed in other cities, to impose them at any cost.

Meanwhile, despite some return to municipal reporting, cheaper syndicated material replaced locally generated news. The new publisher, Michael Davies, bought off corporate leaders and white (not black or Hispanic) community organizers with sycophantic features. He promoted investigative reports—which Kreig exposes as fishing expeditions—of alleged goofing off by low-level government workers, easy targets. He spiked (i.e., killed) pressing tales of massive rip-offs by local corporate powers and decades of undiscovered toxic hazards in Connecticut workplaces.

**Sour grapes or bad apples?** By the time Kreig quit in disgust over the shelved toxic exposé in 1984, the *Courant* ad rates had jumped 1,200 percent in 14 years. One truism of corporate takeovers of locally owned papers—especially those which, unlike the *Courant*, had been run for decades by local family dynasties with personal ties to advertisers—is that out-of-town owners feel more comfortable sucking all the ad revenue they can out of the local market. Even if that means pricing out smaller independent merchants.

Not only are the new faceless, monopolistic owners unaccountable to the community—they barely know it. In one of *Spiked's* classic anecdotes, a veteran reporter finds an editor and several reporters frantically scouring a map in the newsroom, trying to locate a well-known local road to follow an emergency report on the police radio.

"How the hell can you run a Hartford newspaper," the reporter wonders, "with a staff that can't find East Service Road? That's how you get to the Hartford police station, to the post office, to the state jail

and to the jai-alai fronton. For Christ's sake!"

Admittedly, the excesses—and the reactionary impulses of some of the old newspaper dynasties—differ in each case of chain takeovers. And compared to Gannett, Ingersoll or most other chains, Times-Mirror was the kind of chain *Courant* reporters welcomed, given its flagship daily's journalistic reputation. So the news is indisputably bad for newspaper reporters and readers.

Some independent-minded *Courant* reporters differ with Kreig's attack on their paper; to them the book has an unmistakable stench of sour grapes. Yet the paper's reaction to Kreig's revelations—considering a libel suit which could threaten the existence of the book's small publisher—confirms that chain management can be counted on to act like any other large corporation, which is to say, quite differently from guardians of the First Amendment.

**Reformist antidotes:** Like many urban muckrakers, Kreig proposes a reformist prescription to the problem he so passionately exposes. Corporate takeovers and imported brass are to some extent inevitable, he reasons. So he calls for enlightened management.

"Owners of newspapers—whether they be chains or independents—should mix new managers with old hands who have self-confidence and genuine loyalty," he suggests. He also calls for a new rigorous discipline of investigative reporting on the media. His own probing, damning research into the *Courant's* dishonest Pulitzer Prize application for an acclaimed investigative series provides an inspiring model for such reporting.

Such reporting isn't enough, however. The experience of other industries bodes ill for the prospects of enlightened, community-based or accountable management by new corporate owners. Communities can recognize locally owned newspapers as invaluable resources, sources of strength; they can aid—either officially at the governmental level, or in citizen action coalitions of the variety that fight plant closings—employee buy-outs of endangered locally-owned papers.

And federal policy could promote small papers that empower citizens with information about their own communities. Government small-business loans could fund at market or below-market rates the creation of completely local community newspapers. If planned right and truly accountable, such papers can thrive in most places. And operate in the interests of their readers, not a board of directors in L.A.

Paul Bass edits the *New Haven Independent*, a locally-owned weekly in Connecticut.



# Radical chic: Beals and Root on the foreign desk

**The Paris Edition: the Autobiography of Waverley Root, 1927-1934**  
Edited by Samuel Abt  
Northpoint Press 208 pp., \$16.95

**Carleton Beals: A Radical Journalist in Latin America**  
By John A. Britton  
University of New Mexico Press, 322 pp., \$24.95

By Jay Walljasper

**W**HILE NUMEROUS OPINION polls through the years have recorded the public's distaste for the media as a whole, people generally seem to like individual journalists. It's a job with enough esteem that novelists and scriptwriters often station their characters inside a newsroom in between bouts of adventure or romance. From Clark Kent on through Warren Beatty and Diane Keaton's performances as radical reporters John Reed and Louise Bryant in *Reds*, journalism has often been portrayed as an almost heroic calling. This probably accounts for why booksellers always do a brisk business in biographies and memoirs of news reporters.

It's not just famous writers or familiar TV personalities like Linda Ellerbee who attract all the attention in bookstores. Even bylines that were never widely known, such as Latin American specialist Carleton Beals or Paris *bon vivant* Waverley Root—have made recent reappearances on publishers' lists.

Yet all this celebration of journalism's glamour seems a bit baffling to those of us currently doing hard labor in the fourth estate. Every day we are made acutely aware that our pay is unglamorously low, our job security is unglamorously perilous and our actual social status is no higher than that of a mid-level CPA. But we do occasionally get to rub shoulders with the famous, eavesdrop on the powerful, clink glasses with the beautiful, and fire tough questions at the notorious. That's why in the overpriced watering holes where reporters and editors gather, you seldom hear talk of returning to school to pick up an accounting degree.

**Romancing the story:** These two books reinforce this romantic notion of journalists as a lucky breed privy to history in the making. In *Carleton Beals: A Radical Journalist in Latin America*, historian John A. Britton chronicles a reporter's encounters with revolutionary leader Augusto César Sandino, exiled Russian leader Leon Trotsky, painter Diego Rivera, writer Katherine Anne Porter and photographers Edward Weston and

Walker Evans. In *The Paris Edition*, Waverley Root recounts his days on the European edition of the *Chicago Tribune*—a job that brought him into contact with Henry Miller, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway, Charles Lindbergh and assorted other characters.

Britton takes a narrowly academic approach to Carleton Beals' adventurous career. The son of Midwestern populist radicals transplanted to California, Beals belonged to roughly the same generation as John Reed, Max Eastman, Edna St. Vincent Millay and the other so-called lyrical leftists who

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made Greenwich Village famous in the 1910s. Indeed, Beals followed Reed's footsteps south to Mexico to investigate an early edition of conservatives' worst nightmare: "the revolution in our backyard." But what was a one-time assignment for Reed became a lifelong commitment for Beals.

Though most of the shooting was over by the time Beals arrived in 1918, the Mexican revolution was still underway in the form of power struggles between various leaders, all of whom claimed to represent the interests of the nation's downtrodden. Until the '30s Beals regularly reported on the progress and setbacks of the Revolution—including the Catholic Church-inspired Cristero counterrevolution in the late '20s—for *The Nation* and *The New Republic*.

During these years military intervention from the north was always a lingering possibility, and one of Beals' constant themes was that Mexicans deserved the right to shape their own future. It was this deeply felt opinion, on top of his high regard for traditional Indian and peasant cultures, that makes Beals something of a godfather for today's activists seeking solidarity

with Third World peoples. At a time when leftists generally outdid conservatives in their zeal for unchecked industrialization and Western-style development, Beals questioned whether the damage brought to poor countries with modernization did not exceed the benefits.

**Bohemian dreaming:** While establishing himself as one of America's foremost authorities on Latin America, he harbored dreams of some day becoming "a cheerful bum lying under a tree in a good climate, writing poetry." As much of a bohemian as a hardnosed radical, Beals thrived in rustic living quarters amid all-night parties. Mexico City at that time hosted something of a tropical Montparnasse as many bright young Americans such as Beals, Katherine Anne Porter and Edward Weston fled south to escape Babbity, Republicanism and Prohibition.

Beals' most notable journalistic achievement came in 1928 when he trekked through dense jungle on horseback to interview Sandino, the renegade military commander who was rallying peasants against the U.S. Marines in Nicaragua. "Eighteen years of American meddling," Sandino told Beals in the widely-circulated interview, "have plunged the country deeper into economic misery." As an example, Sandino cited the recently negotiated deal for a canal right-of-way through Nicaragua, for which the Americans would pay \$3 million—"not enough for each Nicaraguan to buy a soda cracker and a sardine."

Beals then directed his attention to Cuba, partly out of sadness at the betrayal of Mexico's masses by government leaders after the assassination of president-elect Alvaro Obregón in 1928. In Cuba he found a glaring case of what he believed was the major cause of Latin America's problems: collusion between local tyrants and U.S. business in-

terests.

By the late '30s many Americans had begun to cast an eye toward Latin America—partly out of fear about widespread German and Japanese activity in the region—and Beals' writing was suddenly in great demand. He had a best-selling novel, *Dawn Over the Amazon*, which envisioned a takeover of South America by European fascists, and an influential non-fiction book *The Coming Struggle for Latin America*, which explored the same theme although it also emphasized the dangers of homegrown, U.S.-backed fascists.

**Unpalatable politics:** In the war years and even more so in the '50s, Beals' message of American complicity in Latin America's woes became unpalatable to U.S. editors and publishers. By 1954 he was unable to publish an article that implicated the Eisenhower administration in the overthrow of Guatemala's government. By that time he was living in a Connecticut farmhouse and writing books on New England history to buy groceries. Even these books were attacked by vigilant right-wingers.

As McCarthyism evaporated and public interest about Fidel Castro's guerrillas surged, Beals was back in demand. He traveled extensively in Cuba before and after the revolution, finding some quibbles with Castro but more fault with the revolution's U.S. critics. "American liberals' onslaught on and uninformed criticisms of the new regime come with bad grace," he wrote in a 1959 article in *Christian Century*. "Where were some of the gentlemen during the long years when the human spirit was defiled in Cuba as terribly as it ever was on the face of the earth? Where were our good liberals when our government was shipping arms to Batista and our army officers were training his men and pinning medals on his worst assassins?"

Beals died in 1979, perhaps unaware that a new wave of interest in Latin America was about to sweep American politics and, in the process, spark new interest in his own journalistic exploits.

Unfortunately, Britton's biography provides only a scant outline of these exploits—a dry recitation

of facts often repeated over and over again while significant details about his private life are mercilessly withheld. It's a backhanded testament to Beals' spirit that this book is interesting, despite Britton's pedestrian prose.

**Root of style:** Waverley Root, on the other hand, could write about digging ditches in a captivating way. In a sense, *The Paris Edition* is not much different than that—it's an account of the day-to-day work of newspapering, the chores as well as the glamour. Of course, the book's setting—the Paris of *The Sun Also Rises* fame—adds sparkle. But if Root's career had been limited to covering school board meetings in Kenosha, chances are that would be worth reading, too.

An impetuous young man with a psychology degree from Tufts and a hankering to see the world, Root decided one evening to visit Paris. As he explains in the opening lines of his short, sweet autobiography: "About eight o'clock one evening in April 1927 it occurred to me that I was out of a job, that I had a little money, and that I had long wanted to go to France. At noon the next day I was aboard the SS. *President Harding* steaming down the Hudson, outwardbound."

Though his journalism experience was limited, Root landed a job with the *Chicago Tribune* Paris edition, the lowest-paying but highest-spirited of the city's four English-language dailies. It was the paper that the growing colony of expatriate painters and writers chose to read over coffee in the cafes along Boulevard Montparnasse.

Root hit the ground running on this paper, which he described as "one day a work of genius and the next a ghastly mistake." One of his first assignments was Lindbergh's arrival at Le Bourget airfield, and within weeks he was working as an editor, handling wire service accounts of the Sacco and Vanzetti executions.

**The front page:** Those were the wild and woolly days of newspaper work, which were immortalized by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur in *The Front Page*. Judging from Root's recollections, it seems the reporters Hecht and MacArthur knew in the *Tribune*'s hometown had no more spunk than the ones putting out the Paris edition of the paper. Root's co-workers included Henry Miller on the proofreading desk, all three editors of the influential literary journal *transition* on the copy desk, a world-class Casanova as sports editor, a world-class miser as business manager and Louise, mistress to the whole bunch.

This was the journalistic team that helped nurture a whole generation of American novelists with its splendid book page, and that also reported as Page One news how the Prince of Wales had bludgeoned an insolent soldier to death during an inspection. No one on the edit desk

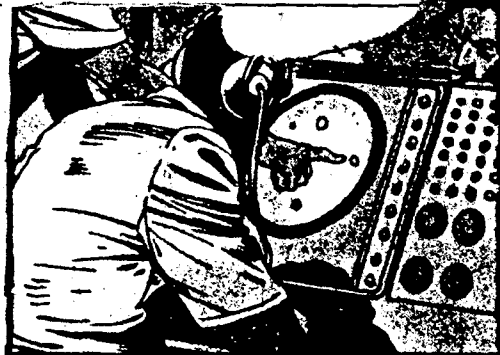
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Waverley Root on the beat with the muse of journalism.





# IN THE ARTS



"AND I WAS ENCOURAGED TO GO TO SONAR SCHOOL. THEY NEEDED A BLACK SAILOR THERE AS AN EXAMPLE -- TO BE WHAT THEY CALLED A 'HOT RUNNER'."



"IT MADE ME FEEL PRETTY GOOD THAT I'D QUALIFIED TO JOIN THEM..."

"...BUT IT WORE OFF WHEN WE ENGAGED IN WARGAMES. WE WERE SUPPOSED TO TRACE AND DESTROY ANOTHER SUB - 'THE RUSSKIES' THEY CALLED THEM."



"OF COURSE, WE ONLY FIRED WATER SLUGS --"

*Real War Stories*: A radically different comic book torpedoes conventional notions of what young people will read.

## Real war comic takes aim at militarism

### Real War Stories

A comic book published by Eclipse Comics

By Osha Davidson

SITTING ON THE RACK DOWN AT the local comic book emporium, flanked by the latest issues of *Captain Atom* and *The Nam*, *Real War Stories* looks pretty much like any other action-adventure comic book. That's because this recent release by Eclipse Comics (the third largest comic book publisher in the country) was crafted by some of the industry's top artists and writers whose credits include *GI Joe*, *Star Trek*, *Swamp Thing* and

*Camelot 3000*.

But *Real War Stories* is radically different. The comic is produced by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCCO), a Philadelphia-based military and draft counseling group, and edited by activist/organizer and all-around trouble-maker Joyce

### COMICS

Brabner (whose husband Harvey Pekar writes *American Splendor* comics and is the current *enfant terrible* of David Letterman's *Late Night*). *Real War Stories* shows the darker side of U.S. military policy and military life that comic books—not to mention the main-

stream press—generally ignore.

The six stories presented in the 48-page comic book are, as the title states, real life experiences of: a Vietnam combat veteran; a recent Navy enlistee who became a conscientious objector while serving on a submarine during the U.S. invasion of Grenada; a college student who served a six-month prison term for refusing to register for the draft; a woman who found sexism rampant in the Army; and a Vietnam-era conscientious objector who served two years alternative service in the California Ecology Corps. The book also includes a resource page for those wanting more information and a centerfold map that shows U.S. troop strength

worldwide.

The CCCO's Lou Ann Merkle, project director for *Real War Stories*, came up with the idea after a high

***Real War Stories* was crafted by some of the comic industry's top artists and writers.**

school student asked her for more information on the military.

"I handed him a whole stack of dry pamphlets and brochures," recalls Merkle. "He took one look at

the literature and said, 'Hey, lady, I am not going to read all that stuff.' I realized then that if we were going to reach those students, we would have to do it with literature that they would read."

Why did stalwarts of the comic world get involved in the controversial project?

Colorist Nancy O'Connor wanted "to be part of a book that works to balance the current epidemic of war-glorifying fantasies such as *Rambo* and *Top Gun*."

Denny O'Neil, who Brabner calls "the dean of comic book writers" and who has written some 700 stories (including several "GI Joe's") over the past 22 years, worked on *Real War Stories* as "a kind of atonement for some others I'm not proud of." During the late '60s and early '70s, O'Neil wrote several comic books dealing with socially significant themes: "drug addiction, ecological problems, economic injustice, racism—everything I was angry about at the time. *Real War Stories* was my return—after a 10-year vacation—to doing something socially relevant in the medium in which I work."

Some of those who worked on the book were paid, while others, like O'Neil, refused compensation.

Says Brabner: "These people in the entertainment industry were given the opportunity to write with the kind of freedom and integrity that those in the underground press enjoy. We told them, 'Don't throw away your color, don't throw away your writing skills. Make it good, make it sexy, make it entertaining. Make it something the kids will really read.'"

And the kids really are reading *Real War Stories*. Released in July, the book sold out within days at comic stores across the country. It has done so well that plans are in the works to produce a sequel covering such topics as Agent Orange, drug screening and unsafe work conditions in the military.

Copies of *Real War Stories* are available from CCCO, 2208 South St., Philadelphia, PA 19146, for \$2.00 each.

Osha Davidson is a frequent contributor to *In These Times*.

## Journalists

Continued from preceding page

that evening was sufficiently sober to realize the story was a prank.

Root is a master raconteur. One anecdote that sticks in my mind is the tale of a fellow newspaperman who yanked open an elevator door and fell several stories down the shaft, emerging with only a limp. Root sums up the event simply: "Drunken men, it appears, fall gently, like flowers."

Root also shines at capturing the throbbing energy of a newsroom. You can almost hear the frantic clack of typewriters as deadline ap-

proaches. And his depiction of Paris during that celebrated time, which so many writers have tried to capture, ranks with the best. His description of the nightly walk home from the newsroom across the Seine to his apartment at 3 rue de l'Ancienne Comédie is reason enough to immediately make reservations with Air France. What is it that explains Americans' long-standing love affair with Paris—and with books about Paris—if it isn't this: "I led a life of unbroken enchantment, whose every day began well and ended well. The beginning came late in the morning, when I arose, pulled up a flap that hung

hinged under the great studio window for a table, and had my breakfast of fluffy *croissants*, or *brioches* yellow with egg, *café au lait*, a piece of cheese, and often...a glass of white wine. (I had still not graduated from the sweet Barsac) enjoying with ineffable pleasure the view spread out below of my most precious possession, Paris."

**Glorious desk jockey:** Root remained in Paris until his death in 1982, his stay interrupted only by a two-year stint in the London bureau of the *Chicago Tribune* and a period in the U.S. during the Nazi occupation.

Unlike Beals, Root did not live

the life of swashbuckling journalistic legend. He spent most of his time behind a desk, or in the cozy cafe across the street. Root's career still seems bathed in that glamour that makes the journalist's life so intriguing to many.

Part of the appeal of stories about these and other journalists lies simply in the fact that most journalists don't seem much different from anyone else—not wealthier or more powerful and probably not any sexier or smarter. Yet they have the opportunity to sit across cafe tables from famous novelists and trek through jungles to interview fugitive revo-

lutionaries. In a sense, the journalist operates as a kind of representative for the public as a whole—a stand-in for the average citizen in the corridors of power and palaces of pleasure. With a little more luck or pluck, many people figure, they, too, could have got a press card and sat ringside at some of the important events that shaped the 20th century. But since they missed that chance, reading about the experiences of Carleton Beals and Waverley Root (or Linda Ellerbee) offers the next best thing to being there.

Jay Walljasper is executive editor of the *Utne Reader*.



# Love in the ruins: laying foundations

**Sammy and Rosie Get Laid**  
Directed by Stephen Frears

By Pat Aufderheide

**S**AMMY AND ROSIE GET LAID, directed by Stephen Frears (*The Hit, My Beautiful Laundrette, Prick Up Your Ears*) and written by Hanif Kureishi (*My Beautiful Laundrette*), sounds like it's going to be a comedy romp. Instead it's a view from the genitals of the end of empire.

During a press preview at the September Toronto Festival of Festivals, where the film had a gala debut in the week it opened in the U.S., co-producer Tim Bevan nervously paced the foyer, warning critics not to expect a sex farce. "I'm worried that people won't be ready for something this...uh...dark," he muttered afterward. And this portrait of life in the ruins of Thatcher's England is dark, and sometimes aggressively angry, as its younger characters are. But, like them, it's also vital, stubborn and alarming.

Its subject matter is passion, and what happens when the cultural channels for it are destroyed. In race-riot-ridden London, where development speculators hover like vultures over the smoking remains, family, social and sexual relations are all in disarray. We enter as confused as Rafi, a retired Pakistani politician.

Rafi (played by leading Indian actor-director-producer Shashi Kapoor) had expected to be greeted at the airport by his wayward accountant son Sammy (Ayub Khan Din), and to return to the London that had seemed to him as a student "the center of civilization." The opening scenes jump from his taxi ride in through urban debris to the sight of cops invading a slum flat and shooting a black woman to death; deadpan faces of curious crowds; and the sight of Sammy and his lover Anna (Wendy Gazelle) trysting in a retro-Victorian bedroom.

The harsh juxtapositions never stop, as Rafi tries to re-establish family ties with his long-abandoned son and Sammy's acerbic social-worker wife Rosie (Frances Barber), and tries to rekindle a love affair with Alice, an ever-so-proper English woman (Claire Bloom).

**Dreams and nightmares:** Hidden behind Rafi's urbanity is his past as a dictatorial leader who tortured in the name of bringing Western civilization to the Third World. Now he wants to take refuge in a tidy England that only exists—and perhaps only ever existed—in his colonial's mind. With his life savings, he'd like to bribe Sammy and Rosie to buy a house "in a city that's

not twinned with Beirut" and to have children.

But Sammy and Rosie are living in the ruins of their own dreams—of a new age of non-monogamous marriage, political activism, multicultural diversity and artistic creativity. They're the center of a disgruntled group of marginalized artists and activists, living in a slum torn apart by class and racial divisions. Outside their idiosyncratic

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apartment are roving rioters and homeless squatters. Inside, their love for each other is the scarred ground on which an inconclusive battle for someone to be and something to live for is fought.

Not even Rafi's money can bring order into chaos. But his presence does put contradictions into high relief. Leftist lesbian friends of Rosie's, one a Pakistani, confront him with his ugly past, and so does the self-righteous Rosie. They do so in the pursuit of a vengeance that fuels their own anger, marginality, and directionlessness.

When he tries to visit his old lover, he can't even get out of the slum neighborhood without the protection of a squatter, the gentle black biker Danny (Roland Gift) who insists on being called "Victoria." As Rafi enters the well-kept grounds of his lover's bourgeois neighborhood, Victoria stands at the window like an apparition. And he smiles. What does he want? Nothing. He stands there, attractive, undeniable, indigestible.

**Sex and self:** In a world where social context is shredded, sexual energy becomes the continuity. (Rafi says in puzzlement to a young woman preaching to him about Eastern religion, "For you, culture is a department store.") Sexual acts are last-ditch assertions of one's selfhood. The lesbian lovers passionately kiss publicly, not only to satisfy themselves but as an aggressive statement. Rosie describes a sociological paper she's written on kissing, giving demonstrations that climax with a come-on to the visiting Danny/Victoria. Sammy and Rosie cling to their "freedom" to have affairs, though that freedom often looks more like nothing left to lose. Rafi's own love affair has already been lost years ago, when his abandonment left his lover with a basement full of bitterness.

And yet that sexual energy is a vital sign of sorts, just as Sammy describes the riots as "an affirmation of life"—just before his sardonic insouciance turns to anger when he discovers that his car has been overturned and set on fire. The ever-present and self-conscious perversity of sexual expres-

sion has to do not with the power of sexuality in itself but the collapse of context for it. And the film's ending, with bulldozers razing the squatters' encampment on the morning after a night of hot sex among three couples—Sammy and Anna, Rosie and Victoria and Rafi and Alice—is one of many metaphors for that perception.

**Better laid than never:** *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* steps boldly out of categories, in an attempt to capture realities that its own characters can't comprehend. The editing is as abrupt as the constant shock of daily life it shows. The high contrast, unsparing cinematography cleverly captures ironies such as the beauty in line, color and landscape of urban ruins and nighttime destruction. Devices like the ghost of the torture victim who haunts Rafi and the buskers who roam the streets as symbols of the impromptu creation of street culture act as a chorus to the central characters. The mix of real and surreal, day and night, plush and tough in the movie's look goes beyond

eclectic. It expresses the violence of cultural collapse.

Expression of character is similarly extreme. People tend to proclaim self-consciously rather than speak. What might seem awkward writing comes off instead as the

**Sammy and Rosie Get Laid: the film's subject is passion and what happens when the cultural channels for it are destroyed.**

desperate efforts of people to define themselves—they have to spell everything out because nothing can be taken as a given. They do so not only in words but in their attitudes and clothing, theatrical and arch.

The casting neatly supports a contrast between an older genera-

tion baffled by the end of expectation and a younger generation for whom the collapse of meaning is a condition of life. Expert veterans Shashi Kapoor and Claire Bloom bring a quiet assurance to their performances that seems to come out of another age. Newcomer Ayub Khan Din plays Sammy with an anxious edge and a vulnerability that's part of the character's arrogance. Stage-trained actress Frances Barber weds desire to despair in her controlled portrayal of Rosie. And as Danny/Victoria, Roland Gift—who's a musician and leader of the group The Fine Young Cannibals—plays a performer for whom daily life is a stage. *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* makes no excuses for its characters, all of whom are compelling without being sympathetic. The social and economic violence conditioning their lives is a denunciation without solutions. Far from hopeful, the film expresses uncomfortable truths of crisis: as things fall apart, people go on, and passion will not be denied. ■

©1987 Pat Aufderheide



Shashi Kapoor and Claire Bloom: Everything falls apart but passion will not be denied.



## Viet-mob

Continued from page 3

Only three of seven other serious crimes linked to the VOECRN or other right-wing Vietnamese since 1981 have been solved, according to journalist Steve Grossman of *Asia Insights*. In the three cases that went to trial, one defendant was found not guilty because of temporary insanity due to "post-traumatic stress syndrome" from the Vietnam War, another had his attempted murder conviction reversed at the prosecutor's request because he "had no prior criminal record in this country," and a third faces a retrial this month after an earlier mistrial.

**Strange coincidences:** Some suggest the lack of arrests and convictions is more than just coincidence. A confidential 1985 Christic Institute report, obtained by *In These Times* from a third party, alleges that U.S. officials "are knowingly training Vietnamese immigrants within the U.S. in the same type of

paramilitary guerrilla tactics which are being actively used against members of the progressive wing of the Vietnamese community here inside the U.S." The liberal, Washington, D.C.-based investigative legal group suggested that Vietnamese criminals who are allegedly receiving U.S. government training use their official connections to avoid prosecution.

Others have a narrower interpretation. "I don't think the U.S. is involved in training Vietnamese in the kind of numbers like they did with the Cubans," says David Truong, a Vietnamese-American who works for *Covert Action Information Bulletin*. According to Truong, many post-Bay of Pigs Cuban exiles who received paramilitary training from the CIA developed into anti-Castro terrorist groups that outgrew U.S. control. Truong says the U.S. may be wary of getting into the same problem with Vietnamese groups. But he adds that U.S. officials may find it expedient to allow right-wing Vietnamese vio-

lence to continue because it provides a measure of "political control" over the Vietnamese community.

Right-wing Cuban and Vietnamese groups are **not** the only organizations friendly to U.S. intelligence that are believed to have engaged in violent operations inside the U.S. According to the International Center for Development Policy's Scott, the Taiwanese and South Korean intelligence services have also reportedly killed dissidents living in the U.S. And in recent months, there have been indications that El Salvador's death squads have begun operating in the Southwest (see *In These Times*, July 22).

Regardless of whether the U.S. is connected to any of the violence, critics say that the government is not doing enough to stop it. "I would expect it to continue and grow," former Attorney General Clark says of the wave of terror, "until U.S. law enforcement gives a clear signal that it will not be tolerated."

## Jackson

Continued from page 22

from the true story of Edmund Perry (see *In These Times*, Sept. 23), a Harlem youth who returns after a stint in an exclusive prep school, faces his street-wise homeboys, and gets shot to death while perpetrating a robbery. In the *Bad* video, Jackson defies his homeboys' criminal intentions and they dance instead of steal.

"The *Bad* video was a blatant attack on black America in general and black men in particular," said Chicago critic Stephanie Henson-Gadlin. The *Village Voice*'s Greg Tate said, "In Jackson's loathesome conception of the black experience, you're either a criminal stereotype or one of the Beautiful People." The video reinforces the current mindset that casts urban black youth as ruthless, underclass sociopaths, and enabled a jury to acquit Bernhard Goetz of shooting four of these specimens merely because he thought they meant him harm.

More than ever before, blacks are criticizing this sensitive child-genius they once revered. Many still are reluctant to join in the denunciations, and that's understandable. Jackson's awesome talents naturally inspire admiration and, through the years, little Michael has been a source of enormous racial pride. The black community felt a real sense of accomplishment when *Thriller* shattered all previous sales records; we watched him grow up and he did good.

But Jackson's transgressions have become too extreme. It's all right to have crossover dreams, but quite another to become a physical crossover reality. Black people can tolerate many blasphemies, but racial rejection is beyond the pale.

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## CALENDAR

### NEW YORK

October 7

Forum: "Should the Courts Take Over Unions?," a discussion of plans to replace "corrupt union leaders" with court-appointed trusteeships. Speakers: Herman Benson, Assoc. for Union Democracy; Joel Jacobson, former trustee, Teamsters Local 560; Representative TDU. Wednesday Oct. 7, 7:30 p.m., Rm. 1311 John Jay College, 59th and 10th Ave., \$3.00 donation. Sponsored by New York DSA.

### NEW YORK

October 11

*The Generation After*, Sunday, Oct. 11, 1987, 2:30 p.m., at 369 Eighth Ave. (corner 29 St., NYC) Lecture and film. "The Holocaust of Russian Jewry," the film "Baby-Yar," the sole documentary on this subject will be shown. Admission \$3, telephone: 231-1196.

### WASHINGTON

October 11

March on Washington for Lesbian & Gay Rights, Oct. 11, 1987. Assemble 9:00 a.m. at the Ellipse (17th & Constitution). March starts at noon, rally at the Capitol. Related events on October 9, 10, 12 & 13. March on Washington Committee, P.O. Box 7781, Washington, D.C. 20044, (202) 783-1828.

### CHICAGO

October 11

Situationist International discussed—Sunday, October 11 at 7:00 p.m. New World Resource Center, 1476 W. Irving Park Rd.; Post-modernism—Oct. 25; Surrealism and Revolution—Nov. 8; Wilhelm Reich and Sexual Revolution—Nov. 22. Sponsored by the Cultural Revolution Series of the Open University of the Left. More information: (312) 924-1036.

October 31

Democratic Alternatives for Illinois Conference to shape strategies for 1988 Democratic Convention. Speakers include Mayor Harold Washington and Michael Harrington; variety of workshops exploring political strategies. October 31 at the Westin Hotel, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. \$25 includes luncheon. Scholarships available. Reservations due October 16, call (312) 427-6262 for more information.

### NATIONWIDE

October 23-26

"25 Years: Back to the Brink," 25th Anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis. National Mobilization for Survival is sponsoring nationally-coordinated regional actions at 8 key nuclear weapons installations, October 23-26. General Dynamics (New England), General Electric (Pennsylvania), Cape Canaveral, Honeywell (Minnesota), Rocky Flats, Sandia Labs, Hanford, Lockheed (N. California). Call MFS: (212) 995-8787.

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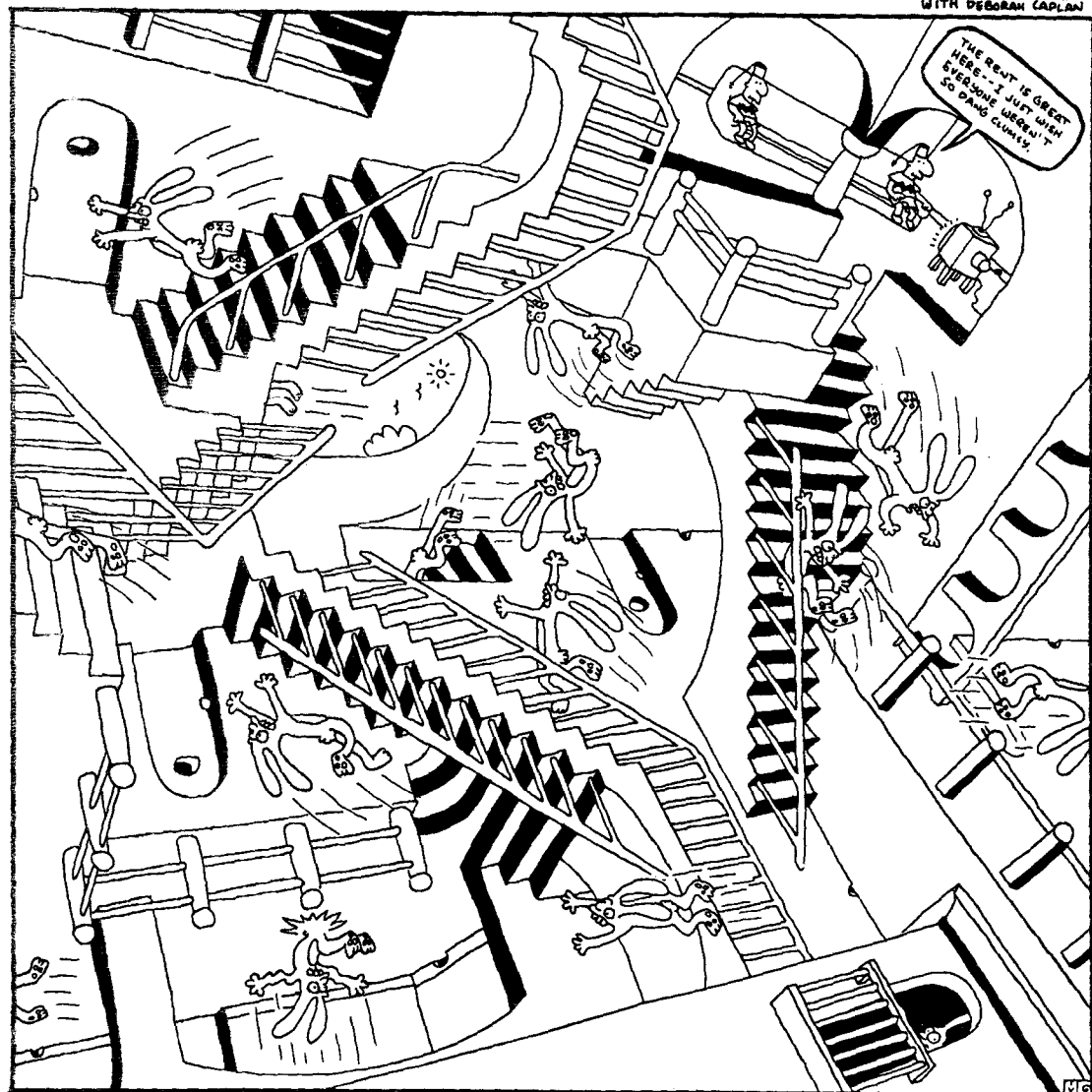
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## LIFE IN HELL

LIFE IN HELL

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By Salim Muwakkil

**D**ENOUNCING MICHAEL JACKSON AS A negative image for black males has been *de rigueur* in certain circles for quite some time. His effeminate manner was the core of the complaint; black men need masculine, even macho, role models to inspire them in the face of U.S. racism, the reasoning goes.

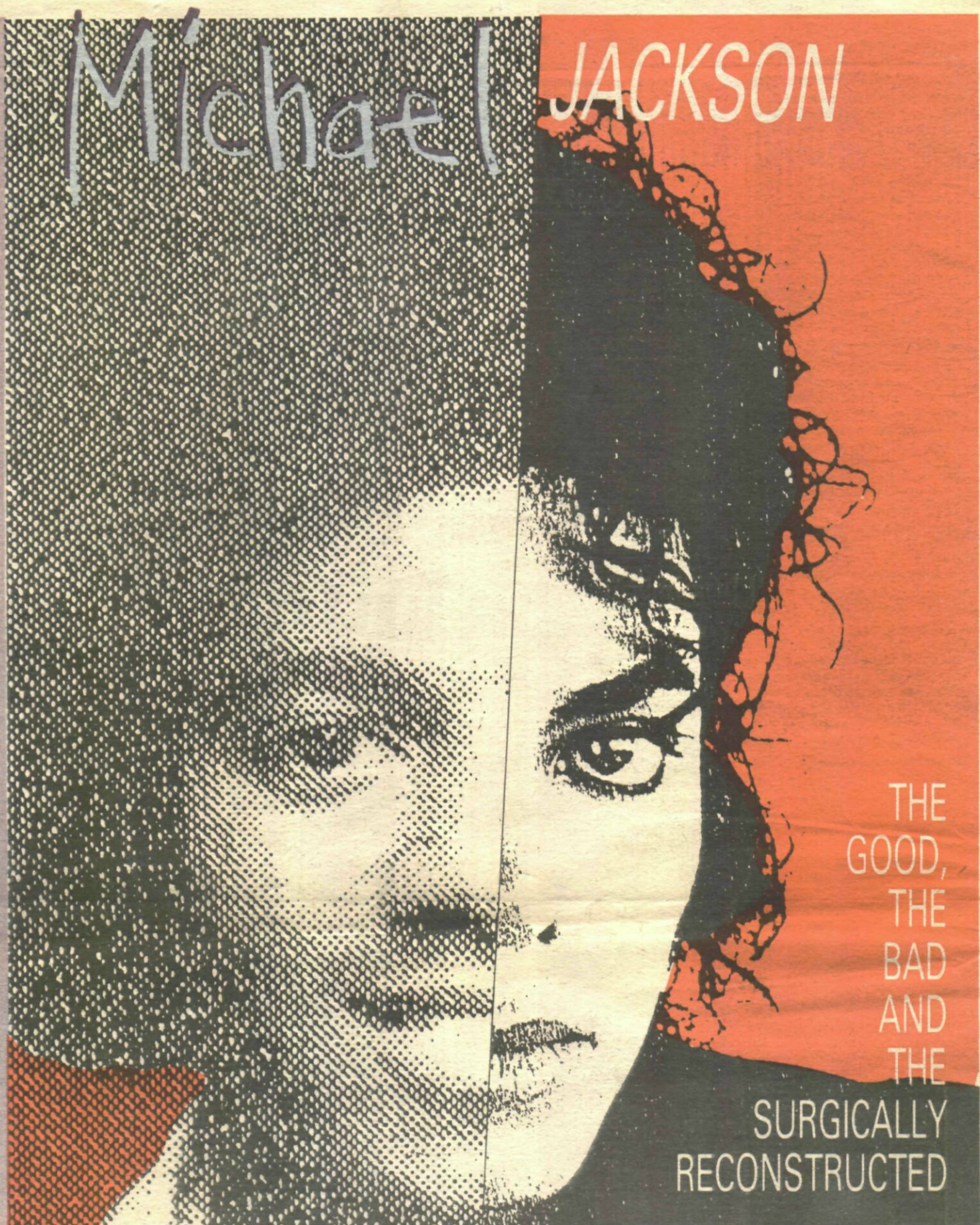
When responding to such arguments in the past I have often asked the proponents to imagine a black street gang—like Chicago's notorious Black Gangster Disciples, following Jackson's example: practicing moon walks, watching Disney cartoons, or finding homes for stray animals, instead of arranging drug sales and murders. My point being: Jackson's influence is overestimated and, even if it weren't, with homicide listed as the leading killer of black young men, a less macho image may just save a few lives.

Jackson's critics make a stronger point when they charge that his attempt to de-Africanize his features is a public declaration of racial self-hate, and a social message announcing yet another devaluation of blackness. The effect of such messages was underlined recently in a new study that found black children harbor feelings of racial inferiority that are just as strong now as they were 40 years ago, when similar research was done. The earlier study, conducted in 1947 by psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark, revealed that when offered a choice between black and white dolls, black children overwhelmingly chose white ones. The information collected in the Clark study was central to the argument used to convince the Supreme Court in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* ruling that outlawed separate but equal education.

The current study was presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association in August; it found that two-thirds of the black children surveyed chose white dolls. "What the children are telling us is that they see their color as the basis of self-rejection," Clark told the *New York Times* upon learning of the new study. "We've tried to hide the damage racism does to black children, but the damage is there, and will continue as long as racism continues."

At best, Jackson's surgically Caucasianized visage does nothing to change this negative state of affairs. But why should Jackson be expected to perform social therapy? Isn't it a bit unfair to saddle him with responsibilities beyond his art? What's more, his entire life has been dedicated to perfecting his extraordinary talents, and from an early age he's been dazzling international audiences. Five years ago he released an album entitled *Thriller* that sold 38.5 million copies worldwide, more than any album in history. This 29-year-old multi-millionaire from Gary, Ind., is perhaps the world's biggest celebrity—Jackson's recent tour of Japan, for example, attracted enormous crowds—and when black people demand his racial allegiance, they're denying his aspiration for a universal identity. Perhaps he's chisled his features to demonstrate once and for all his absolute refusal to fit into any racial stereotype.

**Image as identity:** If it's true that people's faces are shaped by their lives, Jackson's fairy-tale life could find no better expression than the ethereal countenance he presents on the album cover of *Bad*, his latest musical offering. The surgeons clipped his nostrils and lips just as precisely as his manager/father clipped his social interactions with



those who could have provided the precocious child-star with the intimate personal connections he's admitted missing. His knowledge of blacks' struggle for acceptance of their own African features apparently is just as light as his bleached skin.

With only images as companions, is it any wonder that Jackson now confuses image with identity? Even more, Jackson's insular world excluded all but the most pervasive public images; thus his affection for media icons like Elizabeth Taylor, Marlon Brando, the Elephant Man, Brooke Shields, Emmanuel Lewis and various cartoon characters. When psychologist Clark bemoans racism's continuing damage to black children's psychic health, he could just as well be talking about the child-like Jackson and his sheltered life. In that respect, it's not at all surprising to find Jackson rejecting his own racial identity for a white one, just like the children in the two studies.

**The curl factor:** The Afro hairstyle was the fashion in the early and mid-'70s, when Jackson performed with four of his brothers as the Jackson Five. And none wore the style with more flair than the talented group of

young Jacksons. But the deeper meaning of the Afro as a statement in pride in the African features that black Americans had long been ashamed of apparently had not impressed them. For, even before the sibling group disbanded in the late '70s, they replaced the Afro as if it were just another discarded fashion statement, and started wearing the grease-laden, curly-perm style, popularized and still worn by Michael.

The curly style, dubbed "Jheri-curl," after

**The surgeons clipped Michael Jackson's nostrils, lips and chin, just as precisely as his manager/father clipped his social interactions years before.**

the brand name given it by the company that successfully marketed the style, has sparked almost as much debate as Jackson himself. Many black nationalists of my acquaintance denounced it as a "neo-conk," that is just as indicative of a racial inferiority complex as was the original hair-straightening process (or conk) of years long gone. Some argued that the style was so manifestly artificial it obviously was being worn as something ornamental, like a wig. And, they added, since elaborate ornamentation has long been an integral aspect of many African cultures the Jheri-curl style is a topical expression of an African tradition. Such is the level of debate Jackson inspires.

**Unprecedented criticism:** Jackson's instinctual facility for catching the crest of a fashion wave has failed him on his latest foray into the public's consciousness. The 20-minute video for the *Bad* album's title cut had a prime-time showing last month and black tastemakers were almost unanimous in their criticisms of the message projected. Written by novelist Richard Price and directed by Martin Scorsese, the plot takes off

Continued on page 22